



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE**

July 27, 2016

**H.R. 3342**

**A bill to provide for stability of title to certain lands in the  
State of Louisiana, and for other purposes**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on February 3, 2016*

H.R. 3342 would void a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) survey of lands near Lake Bistineau in northwest Louisiana. The bill also would nullify the legal effect of any future land survey of the affected areas. Based on information provided by BLM and other affected entities, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would have no effect on the federal budget.

Enacting H.R. 3342 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting the bill would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

The bill aims to clarify ownership of 230 acres of land that were omitted from a federal land survey in 1842. The State of Louisiana subsequently deeded those lands to the Bossier Levee District, which transferred them to private individuals. Following a resurvey of the area published in 1969, BLM determined that the affected lands, which were then held by private individuals, fell under federal jurisdiction. In recent years, both BLM and private titleholders have claimed ownership of the affected lands and the subsurface mineral estate, but the ownership issue remains unresolved. Under current law, the federal government is spending no money to maintain the lands, and is receiving no income from them.

H.R. 3342 would void the survey from 1969 and nullify the legal effect of any future surveys of the affected area. As a result, the 1842 survey would become the survey of record and, because the affected lands were omitted from the 1842 survey, enacting the bill would not resolve the dispute over ownership of those lands or the subsurface mineral estate. Because the probability of the federal government receiving income from the affected lands would not change, CBO estimates that enacting it would not affect the federal budget.

The affected lands are located in an area with significant natural gas deposits. The development of nonfederal natural gas leases on adjacent lands has resulted in the

extraction of natural gas from the mineral estate beneath the affected lands; royalties on that production could total up to \$350,000. Any party ultimately determined to be the owner of the mineral estate of the disputed lands will be entitled to those royalties on past production. CBO also expects that additional production could occur in the future, which may result in the owner of the mineral estate receiving additional royalty payments over the next 10 years. The amount of future royalties is uncertain, and would depend on who owns the mineral estate, the quantity of natural gas within the mineral estate, the future price of natural gas, and the timing of any future development.

H.R. 3342 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jeff LaFave. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.