



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 18, 2016

### **H.R. 496**

### **Alabama Hills National Scenic Area Establishment Act**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on March 16, 2016*

H.R. 496 would establish a new national scenic area in eastern California. The bill also would authorize the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to award grants to public and private entities to conduct research, provide visitor services, carry out restoration projects in the scenic area, and take federal land into trust for the benefit of an Indian tribe. Based on information provided by BLM, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost \$4 million over the 2017-2021 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Enacting H.R. 496 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting the legislation would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

H.R. 496 would designate about 18,600 acres of BLM land in California as the Alabama Hills National Scenic Area. Under the bill, the agency would be required to complete a new land use plan for the area within three years of enactment. Based on information from BLM regarding the costs of carrying out similar activities, CBO estimates that completing the land use plan would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2017-2019 period.

CBO also expects that, under the bill, the affected lands would see an increase in use by the public and that BLM would need to hire additional personnel to manage the area. Based on information provided by the agency, CBO estimates that operating the recreation area would require up to five new employees to carry out administrative and law enforcement functions and that the cost of employing those individuals would total around \$500,000 a year.

Finally, H.R. 496 would authorize BLM to award grants to organizations that would conduct research, provide visitor services, and carry out restoration projects on the affected lands. Based on information regarding the cost of similar BLM efforts, CBO estimates that awarding such grants would cost less than \$500,000 a year.

The legislation also would withdraw the affected lands from programs to develop mineral resources. Because CBO does not expect that any resources would be produced on the affected lands that would generate income for the federal government over the next 10 years, we estimate that withdrawing those lands would not affect offsetting receipts, which are treated as reductions in direct spending.

H.R. 496 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would benefit the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone tribe in California by taking federal lands into trust for the benefit of the tribe. Any costs incurred by state, local, or tribal governments related to managing the national scenic area would result from voluntary commitments.

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