



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

June 16, 2015

S. 1331

Seasonal Forecasting Improvement Act

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation on May 20, 2015*

SUMMARY

S. 1331 would authorize appropriations totaling \$190 million over the 2016-2020 period for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to expand and improve its capabilities for seasonal weather forecasting. The bill also would require NOAA to carry out various activities relating to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of forecast data.

Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost \$172 million over the 2016-2020 period. Because enacting S. 1331 would not affect direct spending or revenues, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

S. 1331 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1331 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (environment and natural resources).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					2016- 2020
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Seasonal Forecasting Improvement						
Authorization Level	27	27	27	27	27	133
Estimated Outlays	18	23	26	27	27	120
Weather Research Program						
Authorization Level	10	10	10	10	10	50
Estimated Outlays	6	9	10	10	10	45
Other Activities						
Authorization Level	1	2	2	2	0	7
Estimated Outlays	1	2	2	2	*	7
Total Changes						
Authorization Level	38	39	39	39	37	190
Estimated Outlays	25	334	38	39	37	172

Note: Components do not sum to totals because of rounding.

* = Less than \$500,000.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted late in 2015 and that the authorized amounts will be appropriated for each fiscal year. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for NOAA's forecasting and research activities.

S. 1331 would authorize the appropriation of \$26.5 million a year through 2020 for NOAA to develop and disseminate seasonal temperature and precipitation forecasts. Under the bill, NOAA would create an Internet clearinghouse for seasonal forecasts and would build upon existing forecasting programs and partnerships with other institutions and agencies. The bill also would authorize NOAA to award grants to states to receive and distribute forecasts and related information. Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that carrying out those activities would cost \$120 million over the 2016-2020 period.

The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$10 million a year through 2020 to create a weather research program. The program would track, evaluate, and support ongoing research projects conducted by the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing this provision would cost \$45 million over the 2016-2020 period.

Finally, S. 1331 would authorize the appropriation of \$1 million a year over the 2017-2019 period for NOAA to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences (or a similar organization) to conduct a study of the scope and cost-effectiveness of NOAA's satellite systems. The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$1 million a year through 2019 to establish a weather commission to advise the federal government on weather forecasting. Assuming appropriations of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing these provisions would cost \$7 million over the 2016-2020 period.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS: None.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 1331 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Public entities, such as state and local weather agencies and public universities, would benefit from cooperative arrangements and federal grants authorized in the bill. Any costs incurred by those entities, including matching contributions, would be incurred voluntarily.

ESTIMATE PREPARED BY:

Federal Costs: Ben Christopher and Jeff LaFave
Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Jon Sperl
Impact on the Private Sector: Amy Petz

ESTIMATE APPROVED BY:

Theresa Gullo
Assistant Director for Budget Analysis