



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

January 21, 2010

S. 2856

International Fisheries Agreement Clarification Act

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation on December 17, 2009*

S. 2856 would amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to recognize, as an international agreement under that act, an existing agreement between the United States and Canada to jointly manage a portion of the Georges Bank fishery (a 10,000-square-mile fishing area off the Atlantic coast of the United States stretching from Massachusetts to New Jersey). The bill also would amend that act to give the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) greater flexibility in establishing limits on the number of fish that could be caught within the fishery each year. Based on information from NOAA, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would have no significant impact on the federal budget.

Under current law, if NOAA identifies a certain fish population as unsustainable, the agency must limit the number of those fish caught within the fishery in order to achieve a sustainable population within a 10-year period. The agency identifies a fish population as sustainable when the number of fish removed from the stock does not exceed the number supplied by growth and reproduction. Under the bill, NOAA would be required to establish catch limits that work towards sustainable populations within the Georges Bank fishery, but the agency would not be required to achieve those populations within a fixed time period. Based on information from NOAA, CBO estimates that any costs associated with implementing the legislation would be negligible.

S. 2856 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 Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.