



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 19, 2018

### **H.R. 857** **California Desert Protection and Recreation Act of 2018**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
on October 2, 2018*

#### **SUMMARY**

H.R. 857 would allow the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to spend past and future proceeds from the sale of certain lands in California to acquire lands owned by the state. The act also would require BLM to establish a desert tortoise conservation center. In addition, the act would direct BLM to develop plans to identify and conserve cultural resources of certain Indian tribes. Finally, the act would designate some federal lands for conservation and recreation.

Using information from BLM and the General Services Administration (GSA), CBO estimates that enacting the legislation would increase direct spending by \$8 million over the 2019-2028 period; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. The act would not affect revenues.

CBO also estimates that implementing the act would cost \$15 million over the 2019-2023 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Those amounts would be used primarily to pay federal employees to carry out various provisions of the act.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 857 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

H.R. 857 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

#### **ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The estimated budgetary effect of H.R. 857 is shown in the following table. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

|   | By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   | 2019-<br>2023 | 2019-<br>2028 |
|---|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|---------------|---------------|
|   | 2019                                   | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 |   |               |               |
| <b>INCREASES IN DIRECT SPENDING</b>                   |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |               |               |
| Estimated Budget Authority                            | 8                                      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0 | 8             | 8             |
| Estimated Outlays                                     | 1                                      | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0 | 8             | 8             |
| <b>INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b> |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |               |               |
| Estimated Authorization Level                         | 5                                      | 4    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0 | 15            | 15            |
| Estimated Outlays                                     | 5                                      | 4    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0 | 15            | 15            |

## **BASIS OF ESTIMATE**

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted near the start of 2019 and that the necessary amounts will be appropriated in each year.

### **Direct Spending**

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 857 would increase direct spending by \$8 million over the 2019-2028 period. The act would authorize BLM to sell federal land to the state of California and deposit the proceeds into a special account that would be used to purchase other lands owned by the state. In addition, the act would allow proceeds from certain sales that occurred in the past, which cannot be spent under current law, to be used to acquire other state lands. Using information provided by GSA, CBO estimates that the proceeds from past sales that could be spent under the act would total \$8 million. Collections from future land sales and spending of those proceeds to acquire additional state lands would have no significant net effect on the budget.

### **Spending Subject to Appropriation**

CBO estimates that implementing four provisions of H.R. 857 that authorize new activities would cost \$15 million over the 2019-2023 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

**Desert Tortoise Conservation Center.** H.R. 857 would require the Department of the Interior (DOI) to establish, operate, and maintain a desert tortoise conservation center along the border of California and Nevada. The center would support research, monitoring, and rehabilitation of desert tortoises. Using information provided by DOI, CBO estimates that the cost of operating the facility and supporting research would total \$2 million a year.

**Vinagre Wash Special Management Area.** The act would designate roughly 82,000 acres as the Vinagre Wash Special Management Area, and would direct BLM to complete a tribal cultural resources survey for the area. Based on the costs of similar activities, CBO estimates that conducting the fieldwork necessary to complete the survey and a management plan for the area would cost \$2 million over the 2019-2020 period.

**Xam Kwatchan Trail Network Plan.** H.R. 857 would direct BLM to develop and implement a plan to identify and conserve the cultural resources of Indian tribes associated with the Xam Kwatchan Trail network in California and Nevada. Using information from BLM, CBO estimates that conducting the fieldwork necessary to complete the plan would cost \$1 million over the 2019-2020 period.

**Conservation Designations.** The act would make several designations under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Using information provided by DOI, CBO estimates that completing a comprehensive river management plan for each newly designated river would have a total cost of \$1 million.

**Other Provisions.** H.R. 857 also would designate roughly 330,000 acres of federal lands as wilderness, 154,000 acres as off-highway vehicle recreation areas, and 19,000 acres as the Alabama Hills National Conservation Area. Because those designations would not significantly affect the federal management of those lands, CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would have no significant effect on the federal budget.

## PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. The net changes in outlays that are subject to those pay-as-you-go procedures are shown in the following table.

CBO Estimate of Pay-As-You-Go Effects for H.R. 857, the California Desert Protection and Recreation Act of 2018, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on October 2, 2018

|                                    | By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |           |           |
|------------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
|                                    | 2019                                   | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2019-2023 | 2019-2028 |
| <b>NET INCREASE IN THE DEFICIT</b> |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |           |           |
| Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Effect     | 1                                      | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 8         | 8         |

## **INCREASE IN LONG-TERM DIRECT SPENDING AND DEFICITS**

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 857 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

## **MANDATES**

H.R. 857 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

## **PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATE**

On July 25, 2018, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 857, the California Off-Road Recreation and Conservation Act, as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on June 25, 2018. Both versions of the act are similar; however, the Senate version also would designate the Vinagre Wash Special Management Area. CBO's estimate of spending subject to appropriation reflects additional costs associated with that provision.

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