

At a Glance

H.R. 823, Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on June 26, 2019

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2019	2019-2024	2019-2029
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	*	*
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	19	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2030?	< \$5 billion	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

* = between zero and \$500,000.

The bill would

- Designate roughly 200,000 acres of federal land in Colorado for wilderness, recreation, historic preservation, or conservation purposes and generally withdraw that land from timber production and entry under hardrock mining laws and mineral and geothermal leasing
- Authorize the appropriation of \$10 million for the proposed Camp Hale National Historic Landscape
- Direct the Bureau of Land Management to establish a pilot program in the Greater Thompson Divide region to capture and lease methane emissions

Estimated budgetary effects would primarily stem from

- Spending of appropriations authorized for the Forest Service
- Implementing the wilderness designations and the methane capture pilot program

Detailed estimate begins on the next page.

Bill Summary

H.R. 823 would designate roughly 200,000 acres of federal land in Colorado for wilderness, recreation, historic preservation, or conservation purposes. The bill would withdraw those areas, along with lands in the Naturita Canyon and Thompson Divide in Colorado, from entry under hardrock mining laws and mineral and geothermal leasing, subject to valid existing rights. That is, the bill would not allow new hardrock mining claims or mineral and geothermal leases on that land. Some of the land designated under H.R. 823 also would be withdrawn from availability for timber production.

The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$10 million for the Forest Service to conduct historic interpretation, preservation, and restoration activities at the proposed Camp Hale National Historic Landscape. In addition, H.R. 823 would direct the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to establish a pilot program to capture and lease out or destroy methane emissions in the Greater Thompson Divide region.

Estimated Federal Cost

The estimated budgetary effect of H.R. 823 is shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 823^a

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2019-2024
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Camp Hale National Historic Landscape							
Authorization	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
Estimated Outlays	0	1	1	2	3	3	10
Methane Capture Pilot Program							
Estimated Authorization	0	1	1	1	1	*	4
Estimated Outlays	0	1	1	1	1	*	4
Wilderness Designations							
Estimated Authorization	0	2	*	*	*	*	3
Estimated Outlays	0	2	*	*	*	*	3
Other Costs							
Estimated Authorization	0	1	*	*	*	*	2
Estimated Outlays	0	1	*	*	*	*	2
Total Changes							
Estimated Authorization	0	14	2	1	1	1	19
Estimated Outlays	0	5	3	3	4	4	19

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding; * = between zero and \$500,000.

a. CBO also estimates that enacting H.R. 823 would increase direct spending by an insignificant amount.

Basis of Estimate

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted near the start of 2020 and that the authorized and necessary amounts will be provided. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar activities.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 823 would cost \$19 million over the 2020-2024 period.

Camp Hale National Historic Landscape

Section 107 would establish the Camp Hale National Historic Landscape and would authorize the appropriation of \$10 million for the Forest Service to carry out related management, historic interpretation, preservation, and restoration activities. For this estimate, CBO assumes the entire amount will be appropriated in 2020 and spent over the next five years and thus would cost \$10 million over the 2020-2024 period.

Methane Capture Pilot Program

Section 305 would direct BLM to establish a pilot program to capture and either lease or destroy methane emissions in the Greater Thompson Divide region. Under the bill, BLM would develop an inventory of the emissions and a leasing plan. If the emissions are not leased within four years, H.R. 823 would direct BLM to cap or destroy those emissions. Using information from BLM, CBO estimates that implementing the program would cost \$1 million in 2020 for planning activities. In addition, we estimate that BLM would need five additional employees at an average annual cost of \$120,000 each over the initial years of the program. In total, CBO estimates that implementing section 305 would cost \$4 million over the 2020-2024 period.

Wilderness Designations

Sections 102, 103, and 202 would designate new wilderness areas in Colorado and expand existing ones. Using information from the Forest Service and BLM, CBO estimates that the agencies would incur costs of roughly \$2 million in 2020 to amend management plans, complete boundary surveys, and install new signage. Thereafter, we estimate that the costs for additional rangers to patrol those areas would total less than \$500,000 annually. In total, CBO estimates that implementing those sections would cost \$3 million over the 2020-2024 period.

Other Costs

CBO estimates that implementing other sections of H.R. 823 would cost \$2 million over the 2020-2024 period.

Title IV would confirm the boundary of the Curecanti National Recreation Area and would direct the National Park Service (NPS) to complete a boundary survey and a management plan for the unit. Using information from the NPS, CBO estimates that completing those activities would cost \$1 million.

H.R. 823 also would:

- Designate other conservation, recreation, and management areas;
- Adjust the boundary of the White River National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park;
- Release some parcels of land from their status as wilderness study areas; and
- Authorize BLM to issue credits to leaseholders who choose to relinquish leases within the Thompson Divide.

Based on the costs of similar tasks, CBO estimates that implementing those activities would cost \$1 million over the 2020-2024 period.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations

Income from mineral leasing and timber production is classified as offsetting receipts and recorded in the budget as a reduction in direct spending. Under H.R. 823, the federal government would forgo receipts because land would be withdrawn from mineral and geothermal leasing and the commercial timber base. However, CBO estimates that any increases in direct spending would be insignificant over the 2020-2029 period.

Increase in Long-Term Deficits

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 823 would not increase on-budget deficits by more than \$5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2030.

Mandates: None.

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