

H.R. 4636, PLASTICS Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on October 1, 2020

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2021	2021-2025	2021-2030
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	46	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2031?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 4636 would authorize the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to advance the federal government’s ongoing efforts to reduce pollution from solid materials such as plastics in the world’s oceans. Such pollutants are called marine debris. Several federal agencies, including the department and USAID, encourage foreign countries to reduce such pollution and implement waste management, recycling, and public-education programs.

On the basis of information about the agencies’ ongoing programs to prevent and remove marine debris, CBO expects that some of the bill’s goals would be met through existing programs. USAID and the department have provided international assistance of roughly \$10 million each year to reduce marine debris, primarily in Asia. CBO estimates that replicating those efforts in Latin American and African countries would require additional appropriations of \$20 million annually.

Under the bill, the department and USAID also would be required to monitor and evaluate their pollution reduction programs and to report to the Congress on their efforts. Using information about the cost of similar reports, CBO estimates that satisfying those requirements would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2021-2025 period.

Finally, the bill would authorize the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation to invest in integrated waste management systems in developing countries. The corporation can

make such investments in many types of infrastructure projects under current law; thus, specifying that it can invest in those systems would not increase its authority relative to current law.

In total, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4636 would cost \$46 million over the 2021-2025 period; such spending would be subject to the appropriation of the estimated amounts.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 150 (international affairs).

Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 4636

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars					2021-2025
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Estimated Authorization	20	20	20	20	20	100
Estimated Outlays	*	3	11	15	17	46

* = between zero and \$500,000.

On October 31, 2019, CBO transmitted [a cost estimate for S. 2372](#), the Save Our Seas 2.0: Enhanced Global Engagement to Combat Marine Debris Act, as reported by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on September 26, 2019. The two bills are similar. However, S. 2372 also would require the Environmental Protection Agency to expand its current programs to reduce marine debris and CBO’s estimate of the cost of implementing S. 2372 is correspondingly higher.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Sunita D’Monte. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.