



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

October 7, 2014

H.R. 712
A bill to extend the authorization of the Highlands Conservation Act
*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources
on September 18, 2014*

SUMMARY

H.R. 712 would authorize the appropriation of \$11 million a year over the 2015-2021 period to carry out activities to conserve land and natural resources in four northeastern states. Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost \$51 million over the 2015-2019 period and \$26 million after 2019. Because enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

H.R. 712 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA); any costs incurred by state, local, or tribal governments, including matching contributions, would result from participation in a voluntary federal program.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary effects of H.R. 712 are shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					2015- 2019
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Authorization Level	11	11	11	11	11	55
Estimated Outlays	8	10	11	11	11	51

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted late in calendar year 2014 and that the authorized amounts will be appropriated for each fiscal year. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar activities.

H.R. 712 would reauthorize the Highlands Conservation Act, which allows the federal government to fund activities to conserve land and natural resources in certain parts of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The bill would authorize the appropriation of \$10 million a year through 2021 to assist those states in acquiring private lands for conservation purposes and \$1 million a year over that period for the Forest Service to provide technical assistance to the affected states. In 2014, the Congress did not appropriate funds to carry out activities under the Highlands Conservation Act. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 712 would cost \$51 million over the 2015-2019 period and \$26 million after 2019, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS: None.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 712 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA; any costs incurred by state, local, or tribal governments, including matching contributions, would result from participation in a voluntary federal program.

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