



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

October 31, 2011

H.R. 2578

A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act related to a segment of the Lower Merced River in California, and for other purposes

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on October 5, 2011

Under current law, certain portions of the Lower Merced River in California are designated as wild and scenic under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which specifies procedures and policies regarding the use of such rivers and adjacent lands. H.R. 2578 would remove that designation from about one-half mile of the river. According to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), this change would effectively expand the boundary of a hydroelectric facility (project number 2179) licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2578 would have no significant impact on the federal budget. Based on information from BLM, we estimate that any changes in the agency's costs to manage the affected area would not exceed \$500,000 in any year, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. Modifying the boundary of FERC project 2179 could affect FERC's costs related to licensing and regulating that project. However, because FERC recovers 100 percent of its costs through user fees, any change in administrative costs (which are controlled through annual appropriation acts) would be offset by an equal change in fees that the commission charges, resulting in no net change in federal spending.

Enacting H.R. 2578 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. H.R. 2578 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 contacts for this estimate are Megan Carroll and Jeff LaFave. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.