



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

July 2, 2012

S. 1201 **National Fish Habitat Conservation Act**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
on June 21, 2012*

SUMMARY

S. 1201 would authorize the appropriation of \$29 million over the 2013-2016 period for the Department of the Interior (DOI) to fund projects to conserve fish habitats. The legislation also would establish a National Fish Habitat Board and authorize the appropriation of \$6 million over the same period to establish a National Fish Habitat Conservation Office, cover certain planning and administrative expenses, and provide technical and scientific assistance to the board, Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs), and conservation project participants.

CBO estimates that implementing S. 1201 would cost \$32 million over the 2013-2017 period and \$3 million after 2017, assuming appropriation of the specified amounts. Because the legislation would authorize DOI to accept and use gifts and donations, enacting the bill could have a negligible impact on offsetting receipts and associated direct spending; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, CBO estimates that the net effect on direct spending would be minimal in each year. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

S. 1201 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1201 is 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					2013- 2017
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Fish Habitat Conservation Projects ^a						
Authorization Level	7	7	7	7	0	29
Estimated Outlays	3	5	6	7	4	24
Other Costs						
Authorization Level	2	2	2	2	0	8
Estimated Outlays	2	2	2	2	*	8
Total Changes						
Authorization Level	9	9	9	9	0	37
Estimated Outlays	4	6	8	9	4	32

Note: Components may not sum to totals because of rounding; * = less than \$500,000.

a. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service received \$7 million in 2012 for fish habitat conservation projects.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted near the end of 2012 and that amounts specified in the bill will be appropriated for each year.

S. 1201 would establish a National Fish Habitat Board composed of 27 members from federal, state, and tribal agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. The board would approve FHPs formed around specific aquatic habitats and geographic areas and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior regarding the funding of conservation projects. Those recommendations would be primarily informed by the FHPs, which would conduct scientific assessments and identify strategic priorities on behalf of public and private partners.

Fish Habitat Conservation Projects

S. 1201 would authorize the appropriation of \$7.2 million in each of fiscal years 2013 through 2016 for DOI to provide funding for projects to conserve fish habitat, including the acquisition of property. Projects would increase fishing opportunities for the public; increase public access to land; protect threatened and endangered species, fish, and fish habitats; and promote resilience to environmental change. No project could derive more than 50 percent of its funding from the federal government unless the project was located on federal property. Based on the historical spending patterns for other conservation and

land acquisition projects, we estimate that implementing this provision would cost \$24 million over the 2013-2017 period.

Other Costs

S. 1201 would authorize the appropriation of \$1.5 million in each of fiscal years 2013 through 2016 for technical and scientific assistance to the board, the FHPs, and conservation project participants. The legislation would provide equal funding in each year to the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Geological Survey for those purposes. The bill also would provide amounts totaling 8 percent of the funds provided for fish habitat conservation projects (which, assuming appropriation of the full amount, would total about \$600,000), in each of fiscal years 2013-2016 to establish a National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office within FWS and for planning and administrative expenses. Based on the historical spending patterns for programs carried out by each of the affected agencies, CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$8 million over the 2013-2016 period.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 1201 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. State, local, and tribal governments would benefit from technical and financial assistance authorized in the bill. Any costs to those governments would be incurred voluntarily as a condition of receiving federal assistance.

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