



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

February 3, 2012

S. 1953 **Research and Innovative Technology Administration** **Reauthorization Act of 2011**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation on December 14, 2011*

SUMMARY

S. 1953 would authorize funds for the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) within the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) and for several new programs within RITA. The bill would set the amount of contract authority (a mandatory form of budget authority to incur obligations in advance of appropriations) for the authorized programs at \$55 million in 2012 and \$56 million in 2013.

Consistent with the rules in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act for constructing the baseline, CBO assumes that funding provided by the bill for 2013, the last year of the authorization, would continue at the same rate in each of the following years. Hence, CBO estimates that enacting the bill would result in baseline contract authority totaling \$615 million over the 2012-2022 period. That projected funding level represents an increase of \$318 million above the amounts of contract authority currently projected in CBO's baseline for the 2012-2021 period for programs authorized in the bill.

CBO expects that spending for the programs authorized in the bill will continue to be controlled by limits on annual obligations set in appropriation acts. Consequently, the changes in contract authority would not increase outlays from mandatory spending. As a result, CBO estimates that enacting S. 1953 would not affect outlays from direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

The bill does not authorize an obligation limitation level for the RITA programs. However, for this estimate, CBO assumes that the limitation for such programs would equal the amount of contract authority provided. The RITA obligation limitation for 2012, which was enacted in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (Public Law 112-55), totaled about \$28 million less than the contract authority authorized by S. 1953. CBO estimates that the bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$5 million to award cash prizes to researchers studying technologies that could change the transportation

system. Assuming enactment of the estimated obligation limitations for 2012 and 2013 and the amounts necessary for the prize award, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$89 million over the 2012-2017 period.

S. 1953 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

S. 1953 would impose a private-sector mandate, as defined in UMRA, because it would require members of households to respond to data requests from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. CBO estimates that the cost of this private-sector mandate would fall below the annual threshold established in UMRA (\$146 million in 2012, adjusted annually for inflation).

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1953 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 400 (transportation).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars						2012-2017
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
CHANGES IN DIRECT SPENDING							
Estimated Budget Authority ^a	28	29	29	29	29	29	173
Estimated Outlays	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION							
RITA Programs							
Estimated Obligation Limitation ^b	28	56	0	0	0	0	84
Estimated Outlays	10	40	20	10	4	0	84
Research Prize							
Estimated Authorization Level	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Estimated Outlays	0	1	2	2	0	0	5
Total Changes							
Estimated Discretionary Resources	33	56	0	0	0	0	89
Estimated Outlays	10	41	22	12	4	0	89

Notes: RITA = Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

- a. S. 1953 would provide \$318 million in budget authority over the 2012-2022 period.
- b. Estimated discretionary outlays reflect use of funds under the 2012 and 2013 obligation limitations estimated by CBO. (Outlays stemming from additional contract authority shown in the table would be authorized in future legislation that covers the period after 2013.)

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

Direct Spending

S. 1953 would provide budget authority (in the form of contract authority) of \$55 million in 2012 and \$56 million in 2013 for programs administered by the BTS and RITA. The bill would authorize several new programs, including programs to collect data on travel nationwide and a research program intended to focus on multiple modes of transportation.

The current contract authority available for BTS programs authorized by the bill is \$13.5 million through March 31, 2012. Consistent with the rules in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act for constructing the baseline, CBO assumes that funding provided for the first six months of 2012 will continue at the same rate through the rest of this year (for a total level of \$27 million) and in each subsequent year. Because of the baseline construction rules, CBO estimates that enacting the bill would add less than \$500,000 of contract authority in 2012 and about \$1 million of contract authority in 2013 to the baseline projection for programs currently administered by BTS and RITA. The bill also would appropriate \$28 million in contract authority for new programs, including programs to collect data on travel nationwide and a research program intended to focus on multiple modes of transportation. In total, CBO estimates that enacting the bill would add \$173 million to the baseline projection over the 2013-2017 period and \$290 million over the 2013-2022 period for BTS programs.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

Spending Subject to the Obligation Limitation. CBO expects that the contract authority provided in the bill would be controlled by limitations on obligations set in annual appropriation acts. The bill does not authorize an obligation limitation level. However, CBO's estimate of discretionary spending under this legislation reflects obligation limitations that are estimated to equal the contract authority provided in the bill. For this estimate, CBO did not project this discretionary authority past fiscal year 2013, the period covered by the legislation. Because the 2012 obligation limitation has already been enacted, CBO's estimate of the costs of this bill for 2012 only assumes the difference between that current-law limit (\$27 million) and the amount of contract authority provided in S. 1953 (\$55 million). We further estimate that the obligation limitation for 2013 would be \$56 million. As a result, CBO estimates that implementing the RITA provisions of the bill would cost \$84 million over the 2012-2017 period.

Research Prize. Based on information from the Department of Transportation, CBO estimates that awarding cash prizes to researchers working on technologies that could affect the transportation system would cost \$5 million, assuming appropriation of the necessary amount.

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

S. 1953 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Currently, the Census Bureau and BTS conduct several household surveys to collect data on travel behavior and transportation patterns. Participation in some of those surveys is voluntary for household members. S. 1953 would impose a private-sector mandate by making participation mandatory for certain household surveys. Members of households would be required to respond to requests for data from BTS. In general, survey respondents would only have to supply BTS with information, records, or statistics that are in their possession and readily available. Furthermore, large numbers of survey respondents voluntarily comply with requests from the federal government for travel data. Therefore, CBO estimates that the incremental cost of this private-sector mandate would fall below the annual threshold established in UMRA (\$146 million in 2012, adjusted annually for inflation).

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