



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

April 14, 2014

S. 2080 **National Fish Habitat Conservation Act**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
on April 3, 2014*

SUMMARY

S. 2080 would authorize the appropriation of \$29 million over the 2015-2018 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 Partnership Program, 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. 2080 would cost \$32 million over the 2015-2019 period and \$5 million after 2019, assuming appropriation of the specified amounts. Because the legislation would authorize DOI to accept and use gifts and donations, enacting the bill could affect 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 negligible in each year. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

S. 2080 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 effect of S. 2080 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					2015- 2019
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
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 appropriations of \$7 million in 2014 for fish habitat conservation projects.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted near the end of 2014 and that amounts specified in the bill will be appropriated for each year.

S. 2080 would establish a National Fish Habitat Board composed of 28 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. 2080 would authorize the appropriation of \$7.2 million in each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018 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 2015-2019 period.

Other Costs

S. 2080 would authorize the appropriation of \$1.5 million in each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018 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 authorize the appropriation of 8 percent of the funds appropriated for fish habitat conservation projects. Assuming appropriation of the full amount authorized to be appropriated for fish habitat, S. 2080 would authorize the appropriation of \$0.6 million a year over the 2015-2018 period to establish a National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Program 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 2015-2019 period.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 2080 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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