



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

June 22, 1999

### **H.R. 1524**

### **Public Forests Emergency Act of 1999**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on June 9, 1999*

CBO estimates that H.R. 1524 would have no significant effect on the federal budget. The bill would require the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to request from the appropriate officials in the executive branch the authority to remove in an expedited manner dead or damaged trees on about 247,000 acres of federal land. The bill would require the officials considering the Secretaries' requests to consider them promptly and either approve or disapprove them. H.R. 1524 would require the officials to report to the Congress on the reasons for their decision within 90 days of receiving a request from the Secretaries.

According to the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, the Secretaries can request the authority to remove dead or damaged trees in an expedited manner under current law, but they have chosen not to do so because they do not believe the expedited removal authority is warranted for the land specified in the bill. Requiring the Secretaries to request expedited removal authority would impose additional administrative costs on the agencies, but if expedited authority were granted it also could reduce the agencies' costs for environmental reviews. CBO estimates that the net change in administrative costs would be negligible. Once the Secretaries request expedited removal authority as required by the bill, the appropriate officials (such as the head of the Council on Environmental Quality) may or may not decide to grant such authority. If they do, implementing H.R. 1524 could increase the amount or change the timing of offsetting receipts generated from the removal of dead or dying trees. Because H.R. 1524 could affect direct spending (by changing offsetting receipts), pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. However, CBO does not expect that enacting the bill would lead to a significant change in the amount or timing of offsetting receipts.

H.R. 1524 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact is Victoria Heid Hall. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.