



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

December 6, 2001

S. 1621

A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize the President to carry out a program for the protection of the health and safety of community members, volunteers, and workers in a disaster area

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
on November 8, 2001*

SUMMARY

S. 1621 would amend title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize the President to establish a new program to protect the health and safety of disaster relief workers such as firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians. Under this bill, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would be authorized to collect and analyze environmental data at disaster areas to determine whether substances that may be harmful to human health are present. In addition, this bill would authorize FEMA to disseminate educational materials to affected communities and conduct long-term epidemiological studies of affected populations. Finally, S. 1621 would authorize FEMA to work cooperatively with medical and academic institutions, as well as other federal agencies, to implement this program.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary funds, CBO estimates that implementing S. 1621 would cost \$30 million over the 2002-2006 period. S. 1621 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. S. 1621 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1621 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 450 (community and regional development).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Estimated Authorization Level	4	4	8	8	12
Estimated Outlays	2	4	6	8	10

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

Based on information from FEMA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), CBO estimates that implementing the provisions in this bill would cost about \$30 million over the 2002-2006 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary funds.

Under this bill, CBO assumes that FEMA will work cooperatively with the ATSDR to conduct long-term epidemiological studies in certain disaster areas. We expect such long-term health studies would be called for at disaster areas where harmful pollutants are released into the environment. According to the ATSDR, each long-term study conducted under this bill would cost \$3 million to \$5 million a year and could last from 5-to-15 years. It is impossible to predict the number of such studies that might be required in the future. For this estimate, CBO assumes that one new study would be initiated every other year at an average cost of \$4 million per year.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS: None.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 1621 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

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