CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

July 8, 2008

S. 2229
Wyoming Range Legacy Act of 2008

As reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on June 16, 2008

Subject to valid existing rights, S. 2229 would withdraw about 1.2 million acres of federal land in Wyoming from programs to develop natural resources, particularly mineral resources. Under the bill, holders of valid mineral leases or mining claims could voluntarily relinquish their interests and potentially receive compensation from nonfederal entities for doing so. (The bill would prohibit the use of federal funds to purchase any relinquished interests.)

Based on information from the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, CBO estimates that enacting S. 2229 would have no significant effect on the federal budget. Under current law, CBO anticipates that neither agency will offer to sell mineral leases or other interests in lands that would be withdrawn by the bill within the next 10 years; hence, we anticipate no forgone receipts from sales of such interests over the 2009-2018 period. By authorizing nonfederal entities to compensate individuals for relinquishing rights, the bill could reduce federal receipts to the extent that such individuals otherwise would have developed those resources. Under the bill, however, CBO expects that individuals would likely maintain valid existing rights to mineral prospects that are anticipated to be commercially viable; thus, we estimate that any forgone receipts from relinquished rights would be negligible. Finally, we estimate that any change in federal costs to manage land affected by the bill (which would be subject to appropriation) would be negligible.

S. 2229 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Megan Carroll. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.