



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 5, 2000

### **S. 2547**

### **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act of 2000**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
on September 20, 2000*

#### **SUMMARY**

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 2547 would cost the federal government between \$32 million and \$37 million over the next five years and between \$1 million and \$2 million annually thereafter. Because the bill would also affect offsetting receipts (a credit against direct spending), pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. Any effects on direct spending, however, would not be significant. S. 2547 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no significant costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

#### **MAJOR PROVISIONS**

S. 2547 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado when sufficient lands have been acquired to warrant the designation. At that time, the Great Sand Dunes National Monument would be abolished. The bill also would establish the Great Sand Dunes National Preserve on land that is currently administered by the Forest Service as part of the Rio Grande National Forest. The Forest Service would transfer this land to the National Park Service (NPS), which would administer both the new national park and the preserve. The boundaries of the park and preserve would include about 150,000 acres.

Section 6 of the bill would direct the Secretary to establish the Baca National Wildlife Refuge once sufficient land has been acquired to administer the refuge efficiently. The refuge would be operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The boundaries of the refuge would include about 92,000 acres.

Section 7 would allow grazing to continue on former state or private lands that are acquired for the national park, preserve, or wildlife refuge. The Secretary of the Interior also would be authorized to continue grazing on land that is currently federal unless such activity would harm federal resources. The bill would provide that land that is within the boundaries of the national monument, park, refuge, or preserve be withdrawn from use under federal mining and leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights.

Section 8 would authorize the Secretary to acquire lands (and interests in lands) within the boundaries of a designated area by purchase, donation, exchange, or transfer from another federal agency. Section 9 would direct the Secretary to obtain any water rights necessary for the national park and preserve. In addition, this section would authorize the Secretary to sell water resources and related facilities in order to terminate obligations under water agreements executed by the former owners of the Baca Ranch with a local water district.

Finally, the bill would authorize the appropriation of whatever amounts are necessary to carry out these provisions.

## **ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

CBO estimates that the Department of the Interior would spend between \$32 million and \$37 million over the next five years to implement S. 2547, including between \$30 million and \$35 million to purchase property from private landowners in the area and about \$2 million to develop land acquired for the national park and the wildlife refuge. Once all land has been acquired and developed, costs to manage federal sites would increase by between \$1 million and \$2 million annually. These estimates are based on information provided by the NPS and assume appropriation of the necessary amounts.

## **PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS**

The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act sets up pay-as-you-go procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or receipts. The bill would affect direct spending (in the form of offsetting receipts) but CBO estimates that the impact on direct spending would be insignificant.

S. 2547 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to sell water rights purchased with the Baca Ranch to a local water district that currently leases water rights from the ranch owners. Based on information provided by the NPS, we estimate that selling the water resources would increase federal offsetting receipts by less than \$500,000 within the next four years. CBO further estimates that the bill's provisions regarding grazing on federal lands and

withdrawal of lands under federal mining and other laws would have no significant effect on offsetting receipts.

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