

H.R. 5324, NWR Modernization Act of 2021

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on November 16, 2021

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2026	2022-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	52	60
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2032?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

Under current law, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) operates a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information, called NOAA Weather Radio (NWR). Those radio stations also broadcast warning and post-event information for all types of hazards including earthquakes, avalanches, chemical releases, oil spills, AMBER alerts, and 911 outages.

H.R. 5324 would authorize the appropriation of \$20 million to expand NWR coverage to underserved areas through the acquisition and installation of additional transmission infrastructure. The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$40 million for NOAA to modernize the NWR by upgrading its legacy technology to Internet Protocol-based services, accelerating software upgrades, assessing and enhancing the access to and use of transmissions from NWR, among other things.

Recently, NOAA has begun to integrate some of the modernizations that would be required under H.R. 5324 in its current operations. For example, NOAA has begun transitioning to Internet Protocol-based services. In 2021, NOAA allocated \$10 million to all NWR operation and improvement activities.

For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 5324 will be enacted near the end of fiscal year 2022 and that the authorized amounts will be appropriated in 2023. Using historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 5324 would cost



\$52 million over the 2022-2026 period and \$8 million after 2026, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

**Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 5324**

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars					2022-2026
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Expand NWR Coverage						
Authorization	0	20	0	0	0	20
Estimated Outlays	0	3	7	5	3	18
Modernize NWR Infrastructure						
Authorization	0	40	0	0	0	40
Estimated Outlays	0	2	8	16	8	34
Total Changes						
Authorization	0	60	0	0	0	60
Estimated Outlays	0	5	15	21	11	52

NWR = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Robert Reese. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.