

H.R. 5781, National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program Act

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

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2027	2022-2032
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	1,869	not estimated
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 2033?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 5781 would direct the President to establish a national wildland fire risk reduction program and would authorize the appropriation of specific amounts over the 2022-2026 period for various agencies that would total \$2.2 billion. Those amounts would be for federal agencies to conduct research and development on the effects of wildfires and detecting, preparing for, mitigating, and preventing wildfires. The bill also would direct the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to establish and manage interagency and advisory committees on wildfire risk reduction and would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to the Congress on the program.

The estimated budgetary effects of the legislation and the amounts that would be provided to each agency are detailed in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget functions 250 (general science, space, and technology), 300 (natural resources and environment), 370 (commerce and housing credit), 450 (community and regional development), and 800 (general government).

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted late in fiscal year 2022 and that the authorized and estimated amounts will be provided each year.



**Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 5781**

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2022-2027
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
National Institute of Standards and Technology							
Authorization	18	36	36	37	37	0	164
Estimated Outlays	*	14	32	36	37	37	156
National Science Foundation							
Authorization	25	53	56	60	63	0	257
Estimated Outlays	*	15	30	45	55	55	200
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration							
Authorization	100	215	220	230	250	0	1,015
Estimated Outlays	*	200	200	230	240	100	970
National Aeronautics and Space Administration							
Authorization	48	100	110	110	110	0	478
Estimated Outlays	*	60	115	110	110	70	465
Environmental Protection Agency							
Authorization	6	12	12	13	14	0	57
Estimated Outlays	*	10	12	13	14	5	54
Federal Emergency Management Agency							
Authorization	3	6	7	7	8	0	31
Estimated Outlays	*	1	3	5	6	7	22
Other Costs							
Estimated Authorization	*	*	*	*	*	*	2
Estimated Outlays	*	*	*	*	*	*	2
Total							
Estimated Authorization	200	422	441	457	482	*	2,004
Estimated Outlays	*	300	392	439	462	274	1,869

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding; * = between zero and \$500,000.

H.R. 5781 would authorize appropriations totaling \$398 million in 2022. Using information on existing activities, CBO estimates that in 2022, the affected agencies allocated about half of the authorized amount for wildfire research and development. Thus, we estimate that H.R. 5781 would authorize an increase in spending subject to appropriation in 2022 of \$200 million—the difference between the authorized amounts and the allocated amounts.

Across those agencies, the bill would authorize appropriations totaling \$398 million in 2022. Using information on existing activities, CBO estimates that in 2022, those agencies have allocated about half of the authorized amount for wildfire research and development. Thus, we estimate that H.R. 5781 would authorize an increase in spending subject to appropriation in 2022 of \$200 million—the difference between the amounts authorized in the bill and the amounts allocated under current law. Based on historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that providing the authorized appropriations would cost about \$1.9 billion over the 2022-2027 period and \$2 billion over the 2022-2032 period.



Based on the costs of similar tasks, CBO estimates that OSTP would need between one and two employees, at an average annual cost of \$165,000 each, to manage the committees. We also estimate that any costs incurred by GAO to prepare the required report would be insignificant. In total, CBO estimates that implementing those requirements would cost \$2 million over the 2022-2027 period.

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