

WILDLIFE REFUGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION  
FOR THE COMMUNITY ACT

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APRIL 25, 2022.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of  
the Union and ordered to be printed

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Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,  
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 972]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 972) to establish the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 972 is to establish the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Riverside County is located in Southern California, spanning from the Greater Los Angeles area to the Arizona Border. The county is the fourth most populated in the state, with 2.46 million people.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this large population and high growth rates, the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority was established in 2004 to implement the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).<sup>2</sup> The MSHCP framework seeks to preserve a half million acres of wildlife habitat to allow for future development and infrastructure projects nec-

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<sup>1</sup>*QuickFacts, Riverside County, California*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/riversidecountycalifornia> (estimate of July 1, 2021).

<sup>2</sup>*See About RCA*, W. RIVERSIDE CNTY. REG'L CONSERVATION AUTH., <https://www.wrc-rca.org/about-rca/> (last visited Apr. 8, 2022). *See generally Habitat Conservation Plans*, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Serv., <https://www.fws.gov/service/habitat-conservation-plans> (last visited Apr. 8, 2022).

essary to accommodate the growing population. The MSHCP protects 146 native species of plants, birds, and animals,<sup>3</sup> and at the time of the MSHCP's drafting there were 32 listed and proposed species in the MSHCP Plan Area.<sup>4</sup>

H.R. 972 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge within the lands and waters of the Plan Area. The purpose of this refuge is to conserve habitats for future generations, support the recovery and protection of threatened and endangered species, and provide the refuge with habitat connectivity and migratory corridors.

#### COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 972 was introduced on February 11, 2021, by Representative Ken Calvert (R-CA). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife. On July 14, 2021, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered, and the bill was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

#### HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House Rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: full committee markup by the House Committee on Natural Resources held on July 14, 2021.

#### COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

#### COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, September 15, 2021.*

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,  
*Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 972, the Wildlife Refuge Conservation and Recreation for the Community Act.

<sup>3</sup>About RCA, *supra* note 2.

<sup>4</sup>W. RIVERSIDE CNTY. MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN vol. 4, 2.5 (2003), <https://www.rctlma.org/Portals/0/mshcp/volume4/02.html#2.5>.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Janani Shankaran.

Sincerely,

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,  
*Director.*

Enclosure.

<b>H.R. 972, Wildlife Refuge Conservation and Recreation for the Community Act</b>			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on July 14, 2021			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2021	2021-2026	2021-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	*	*
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	3	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes	<b>Mandate Effects</b>	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2032?	< \$5 billion	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 972 would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to establish the Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge in California. Under the bill, federal agencies that manage land within the proposed boundary, including the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the Army Corps of Engineers, would be required to assess the suitability of transferring their land to USFWS to include in the refuge.

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bill would be enacted around the end of calendar year 2021. Using information from the affected agencies, CBO estimates that the federal government would incur costs totaling \$3 million over the 2022–2026 period to establish the refuge; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. That amount includes the costs to assess federal land for inclusion, complete the necessary environmental studies, and conduct related planning. CBO estimates that the net change in costs to manage the land would be negligible over the 2022–2026 period.

H.R. 972 would authorize USFWS to acquire nonfederal land by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. CBO expects that any donations, which are classified in the budget as offsetting receipts or reductions in direct spending, would be spent soon thereafter, resulting in a negligible effect on net direct spending.

Any income from communication site leases, timber production, and special use permits on federal land is also classified in the budget as offsetting receipts. Under H.R. 972, the federal government could forgo such receipts if federal land was transferred to the refuge because it would be unavailable for some of those purposes. However, CBO expects that federal agencies would probably

not transfer land that generates such income; thus, CBO estimates that any reduction in those receipts would be insignificant over the 2022–2031 period.

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

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to establish the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge.

#### EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

#### UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

According to CBO, this bill contains no unfunded mandates as defined by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

#### EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program.

#### APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes to existing law.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS

None.