CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

September 2, 2009

S. 952
Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on August 5, 2009

SUMMARY

S. 952 would amend current law to attempt to reduce the effects of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia (reduced oxygen level) in certain bodies of water. The bill would authorize the appropriation of $40 million a year over the 2010-2014 period for a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) program to mitigate the effects of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia. Assuming appropriation of the necessary and authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost $171 million over the 2010-2014 period and $24 million after 2014.

S. 952 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 952 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2009-2014
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION							
Spending Under Current Law [a]							
Budget Authority/Authorization Level	12	30	0	0	0	0	42
Estimated Outlays	12	20	6	4	0	0	42
Proposed Changes							
Mitigation Program							
Authorization Level	0	10	40	40	40	40	170
Estimated Outlays	0	7	28	35	39	40	149
Pilot Programs							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	5	5	5	5	5	25
Estimated Outlays	0	3	4	5	5	5	22
Subtotal							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	15	45	45	45	45	195
Estimated Outlays	0	10	32	40	44	45	171
Spending Under S. 952							
Budget Authority/Estimated Authorization Level	12	45	45	45	45	45	237
Estimated Outlays	12	30	38	44	44	45	213

a. The 2009 level is the amount appropriated for that year; $30 million is authorized to be appropriated in 2010 for this program under current law.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 952 will be enacted near the end of fiscal year 2009 and that the authorized and necessary amounts will be appropriated each year. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar NOAA programs.

S. 952 would authorize the appropriation of $40 million a year over the 2010-2014 period for a NOAA program to mitigate the effects of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in coastal waters and the Great Lakes. (In 2010, $30 million is authorized to be appropriated for this program under current law.) The bill would direct NOAA to enhance several existing grant programs and establish at least two new programs related to algal blooms and hypoxia. The bill also would require NOAA to oversee and coordinate regional efforts to address related problems. Finally, the bill would require NOAA to submit biennial and five-year reports to Congress describing the activities of the program.

Additionally, S. 952 would direct an interagency task force to establish a pilot program to research the occurrence of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in freshwater systems. Based on information from NOAA, CBO estimates that implementing the pilot program would cost $22 million over the 2010-2014 period and $3 million after 2014.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary and authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 952 would cost $171 million over the 2010-2014 period and $24 million after 2014.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 952 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

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