



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

September 14, 2009

**H.R. 905
Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
and Underwater Preserve Boundary Modification Act**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on July 29, 2009

H.R. 905 would expand the boundary of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve, located in Lake Huron and managed jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the state of Michigan. The proposed boundary expansion would encompass submerged lands within the Michigan counties of Presque Isle and Acona, ranging northward to the United States-Canada border.

The cost of implementing H.R. 905 is uncertain because the bill, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources, does not specify a new southern boundary for the sanctuary. Because the legal description of the proposed expansion area omits a coordinate necessary to establish a new southern boundary, CBO cannot determine the size of the expanded sanctuary (the sanctuary currently encompasses about 448 square miles).

Information provided by committee staff, indicates that the committee intended to set the new boundary to encompass about 4,000 square miles. Based on information provided by NOAA (and assuming the availability of appropriated funds), we estimate that managing a sanctuary of that size would cost \$2 million a year—about \$1 million more than the agency currently spends at the sanctuary—beginning in fiscal year 2010. (Depending on final Congressional action to establish the southern boundary, the additional cost of managing the larger sanctuary could be more or less than \$1 million a year.) We estimate that additional costs for administrative facilities and to revise signs and maps would be less than \$100,000 over the next two or three years.

H.R. 905 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

On June 16, 2009, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 380, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve Boundary Modification Act, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on May 20, 2009. The two versions of the legislation are similar. The estimate for S. 380 included the cost to acquire a new vessel for research, monitoring, and enforcement activities at Thunder Bay. Because NOAA recently acquired a vessel that may be used for those purposes, CBO now estimates that additional spending for infrastructure under both versions of legislation would be less than we estimated earlier.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jeff LaFave. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.