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106TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
{ 106-462

RED RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ACT

OCTOBER 2 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2000.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, submitted the following

REPORT

[to accompany H.R. 4318]

The Committee on Environment and Public Works, to which was referred a bill to provide for the establishment of the Red River National Wildlife Refuge in the Red River flood plain between Alexandria, Louisiana and the Arkansas-Louisiana state boundary, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon and recommends that the bill do pass.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On March 14, 1903, by Executive Order, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island. Pelican Island is a small island in Florida's Indian River; the refuge was established specifically to protect the brown pelican. At the turn of the century, brown pelicans were being hunted for their feathers for hats and quills, causing a significant decline in the population.

Today, the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) has evolved into the most comprehensive system of lands devoted to wildlife protection and management in the world. Currently, there are 526 refuges in the United States and its territories, providing important habitat for 700 bird species, 220 mammal species, 250 species of amphibians and reptiles, and over 200 fish species. The refuges range in size from less than one acre at the Mille Lac National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota, to 19.2 million in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Each year, the Refuge System attracts more than 34 million visitors who participate in a variety of recreational activities including observing and photographing

wildlife, fishing, hunting and taking part in system-sponsored educational programs.

The operation and management of the Refuge System is governed by numerous laws, treaties and executive orders pertaining to the conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. The most important orders and laws affecting the Refuge System are the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. The management of individual refuges is determined by the legislation, executive order or legislative action that creates the refuge.

H.R. 4318 would authorize the establishment of an approximately 50,000 acres National Wildlife Refuge located in the Red River flood plain between Alexandria, Louisiana and the Arkansas-Louisiana state boundary. This area is a migration corridor for more than 350 species of birds funneling through North America from as far north as the Arctic Circle to as far as Tierra del Fuego in South America. The birds that utilize this area include migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and neotropical migratory birds.

Due to the lack of a national wildlife refuge or significant State or private sanctuaries, there is limited resting habitat for birds along this migration corridor. Additionally, the Red River Valley is the most degraded watershed in the region due primarily to the clearance of almost all forest cover. The Red River National Wildlife Refuge will consist of individual units to be managed from a central office located in the Shreveport-Bossier City, Louisiana metropolitan area.

Although the bill authorizes such sums as are necessary for the purchase of the refuge land, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated that the estimated cost is \$40–60 million.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In compliance with section 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the reported bill. The reported bill will have no regulatory impact. This bill will not have any adverse impact on the personal privacy of individuals.

MANDATES ASSESSMENT

In compliance with the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–4), the committee finds that H.R. 4318 would impose no Federal intergovernmental unfunded mandates on State, local, or tribal governments. All of the bills directives are imposed on Federal agencies. The bill does not directly impose any private sector mandates.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On September 13, 2000, H.R. 4318 was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. No hearings were held on this bill. The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a business meeting to consider this bill on September 21; the business meeting was continued on September 28, 2000. On Sep-

tember 28, 2000, H.R. 4318 was favorably reported by the committee on a voice vote.

COST OF LEGISLATION

Section 403 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act requires that a statement of the cost of the reported bill, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office, be included in the report. That statement follows:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2000.

Hon. ROBERT C. SMITH, *Chairman,*
Committee on Environment and Public Works,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 4318, the Red River National Wildlife Refuge Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Deborah Reis, who can be reached at 226-2860.

Sincerely,

DAN L. CRIPPEN.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

H.R. 4318 Red River National Wildlife Refuge Act, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on September 28, 2000

H.R. 4318 would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to establish the Red River National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, effective on the date that the agency determines that it has acquired enough land within the boundaries of the proposed refuge to be managed efficiently. The Act would authorize the agency to acquire land, water, and related interests within the proposed 50,000-acre refuge. In addition to managing this acreage, the agency would restore native species and ecosystems and provide opportunities for environmental education and for recreational uses such as hunting and fishing. The legislation would require the agency to construct and operate a wildlife interpretation and education center at the new refuge. For the purposes of acquiring, developing, and operating the refuge, the Act would authorize the appropriation of whatever sums are necessary.

The cost of implementing H.R. 4318 would depend on the outcome of formal property appraisals and on the degree of restoration and development undertaken at the proposed refuge. Based on information provided by the USFWS, CBO estimates that it would cost between \$70 million and \$100 million over the next 10 years to implement this legislation, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. We estimate that about 60 percent of the funds would be needed to acquire about 50,000 acres. The agency would

use between \$20 million and \$30 million to restore habitat and species within the new lands and to construct a wildlife interpretation and education center. During the acquisition and development period, managing the new acreage and related construction projects would cost \$5 million over the 10 years. After this period, when all land has been acquired and developed, we estimate that the agency would spend between \$3 million and \$5 million annually to operate it and to make payments to local governments under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

H.R. 4318 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The legislation contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On August 9, 2000, CBO prepared a cost estimate for H. R. 4318, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on July 26, 2000. The two versions of the legislation are very similar, and our cost estimates are identical.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis, who can be reached at 226-2860. The estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

Section 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, provides that reports to the Senate should show changes in existing law made by the bill as reported. Passage of this bill will make no changes to existing law.

