

H.R. 4866, Fire Weather Development Act of 2023

As reported by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on September 22, 2023

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2024	2024-2029	2024-2034
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	32	not estimated
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 4866 would authorize appropriations for federal agencies to develop and improve fire weather forecasts, establish committees to research wildfires, and develop recommendations for disseminating fire warnings. CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted near the middle of calendar year 2024 and that the authorized and estimated amounts will be appropriated for each year. In total, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$32 million over the 2024-2029 period; any spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Fire Weather Activities

H.R. 4866 would authorize the appropriation of \$20 million in 2024 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to forecast fire weather events, improve communication systems for disseminating fire warnings, and collaborate with nonfederal entities to incorporate new technology into fire weather forecasts. In 2024, NOAA has allocated \$8 million for those activities; therefore, CBO estimates the bill would authorize an additional \$12 million for those purposes in 2024. Based on historical spending patterns, CBO estimates that implementing those activities would cost \$12 million over the 2024-2029 period.

Wildfire Communications

H.R. 4866 would authorize the appropriation of \$3 million a year from 2024 through 2028 for the National Institute of Standards and Technology to upgrade communication systems

See also

[CBO's Cost Estimates Explained](#), [CBO Describes Its Cost-Estimating Process](#), [Glossary](#)



that transmit real-time data and alerts to and from fire management response officials. Based on historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing the program would cost \$15 million over the 2024-2029 period.

Advisory Committees

H.R. 4866 would direct the Office of Science and Technology Policy to establish an interagency committee to develop a strategic plan for developing tools to predict wildfires and to deliver those tools to state and local emergency officials. Additionally, the bill would establish an advisory committee to recommend opportunities to streamline federal wildfire forecasting and communication methods. Based on the costs of similar programs, CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$5 million over the 2024-2029 period.

The estimated budgetary effect of H.R. 4866 is shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget functions 300 (natural resources) and 370 (commerce and housing credit).

Table 1. Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 4866							
	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2024-2029
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
NOAA Fire Weather Activities							
Estimated Authorization ^a	12	0	0	0	0	0	12
Estimated Outlays	1	7	2	1	1	0	12
Wildfire Communications							
Authorization	3	3	3	3	3	0	15
Estimated Outlays	*	4	4	3	3	1	15
Advisory Committees							
Estimated Authorization	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Estimated Outlays	*	1	1	1	1	1	5
Total Changes							
Estimated Authorization	16	4	4	4	4	1	33
Estimated Outlays	1	12	7	5	5	2	32

NOAA = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

* = between zero and \$500,000.

a. NOAA has allocated \$8 million to similar fire weather activities from funds provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42). The amounts shown in 2024 reflect the difference between what the bill would authorize in 2024 and the amount already provided.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Kelly Durand and Aurora Swanson. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

Phillip L. Swagel
Director, Congressional Budget Office