

S. 594, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Completion Act

As reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on May 16, 2024

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2029	2025-2034
Direct Spending (Outlays)	*	*	*
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	*	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	1	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?	Yes
		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
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

S. 594 would direct the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to complete the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail as a contiguous recreational route, to the maximum extent possible, by November 10, 2028. The departments would be required to prepare a trail acquisition and development plan and report periodically to the Congress on their progress.

According to the departments, activities are underway to complete the trail, including optimal location review, land acquisition planning, and trail construction. On that basis, and the costs of similar tasks, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would require the equivalent of one additional employee’s time, at an average annual cost of \$120,000, for a total cost of \$1 million over the 2025-2029 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

In addition, efforts to fill current gaps in the trail via land acquisition or easements would depend on reaching agreements with individual landholders. Using information from the departments, CBO expects that they would pay for some of the necessary land using the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), but that most landholders would not be willing to sell in the next few years. CBO therefore estimates a 50 percent probability that the roughly 150 miles of major gaps identified in the trail would be filled over the 2025-2034 period.

See also

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



The LWCF is available under current law and CBO expects that all of the amounts in that fund will be spent, though some of that spending will occur after 2034. Further, CBO cannot predict the timing of unspecified future land purchases. As a result, CBO expects any amounts used to purchase land under S. 594 would primarily be shifted from spending for other land purchases. Therefore, CBO estimates that enacting the bill would, on net, increase spending from the LWCF by an insignificant amount over the 2024-2034 period.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phillip L. Swagel', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Phillip L. Swagel
Director, Congressional Budget Office