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111TH CONGRESS, 1st Session | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES | REPORT 111–81

GREAT LAKES ICEBREAKER REPLACEMENT ACT

APRIL 21, 2009.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. OBERSTAR, from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1747) to authorize appropriations for the design, acquisition, and construction of a combined buoy tender-icebreaker to replace icebreaking capacity on the Great Lakes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

H.R. 1747, the "Great Lakes Icebreaker Replacement Act", authorizes $153 million for the design and construction of a new icebreaker for service on the Great Lakes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

H.R. 1747, the "Great Lakes Icebreaker Replacement Act", recognizes the need to provide an additional Coast Guard icebreaker on the Great Lakes and authorizes appropriations for this Coast Guard project. Executive Order No. 7521, dated December 21, 1936, states "the Coast Guard . . . is hereby directed to assist in keeping open to navigation by means of ice-breaking operations . . . channels and harbors in accordance with the reasonable demands of commerce." Five of the Coast Guard's icebreakers on the Great Lakes are nearing the end of their useful lives and two of the buoy tenders that the Coast Guard uses to break ice cannot handle heavy ice conditions. As a result, in the spring of 2008, U.S.-flag ships on the Lakes sustained $1.3 million in damage to their hulls because the Coast Guard was unable to keep the channels open.

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Ice starts to form on the Great Lakes in early December and normally lasts until mid-April. During "ice season" alone, 20 percent of the iron ore needed for the nation's manufacturing heartland is carried by Great Lakes vessels. In the 2006–2007 ice season, 10.4 million tons of iron ore were moved on the Great Lakes and supported 100,000 jobs at steel mills and 300,000 jobs at supplier industries.

Electrical power generation in the region is also supported by icebreakers as they ensure that commercial vessels can move over 6.4 million tons of coal to power plants in the region.

Manufacturing and power industries cannot stockpile their inventories for the winter and the mines do not have the capacity to produce extra materials during the summer to last these industries through the winter. Therefore, they depend on the icebreaking capacity of the Coast Guard to keep shipping lanes open during these winter months just as snow plows keep highways open for surface transportation.

The Coast Guard also uses icebreakers on the Great Lakes to assist the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in clearing ice from rivers and harbors to prevent storm and flood damage from ice that forms dams leading to flooding in local communities.

In 2006, the Coast Guard accepted delivery of the Coast Guard icebreaker MACKINAW. This icebreaker has proven extremely capable of breaking ice on the Lakes during the past two winters. The Coast Guard could use this design to build a sister ship that could set and maintain buoys during the spring, summer, and fall and then break ice to keep shipping channels open for commercial vessels during the winter months.

SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATION

H.R. 1747 authorizes $153 million for the design, acquisition, and construction of a combined buoy tender-icebreaker to replace icebreaking capacity on the Great Lakes.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On March 26, 2009, Chairman James L. Oberstar introduced H.R. 1747, the "Great Lakes Icebreaker Replacement Act". This bill has not been introduced in a previous Congress. On March 2, 2009, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure ordered the bill reported favorably to the House by voice vote with a quorum present.

RECORD VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the House of Representatives requires each committee report to include the total number of votes cast for and against on each record vote on a motion to report and on any amendment offered to the measure or matter, and the names of those members voting for and against. There were no recorded votes taken in connection with consideration of H.R. 1747 or ordering the bill reported. A motion to order H.R. 1747 reported favorably to the House was agreed to by voice vote with a quorum present.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in this report.

COST OF LEGISLATION

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives does not apply where a cost estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 has been timely submitted prior to the filing of the report and is included in the report. Such a cost estimate is included in this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, and 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee references the report of the Congressional Budget Office included in the report.

2. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the performance goals and objective of this legislation are to provide funding for the design and construction of a new replacement ice-breaker for the Great Lakes.

3. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1747 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 15, 2009.

Hon. JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1747, the Great Lakes Icebreaker Replacement Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Aurora Swanson.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS W. ELMENDORF,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 1757—Great Lakes Icebreaker Replacement Act

Summary: H.R. 1747 would authorize the appropriation of $153 million to construct an icebreaker ship for the Coast Guard to use on the Great Lakes. Assuming appropriation of the authorized amount, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1747 would cost $135 million over the 2010–2014 period. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

H.R. 1747 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no cost on state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimated Cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 1747 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 400 (transportation).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010–2014
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Authorization Level	153	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	18	38	34	28	17	135

Basis of estimate: For this estimate, CBO assumes H.R. 1747 will be enacted late in fiscal year 2009 and that the entire amount authorized by the bill will be appropriated in fiscal year 2010. The outlay estimate is based on historical spending patterns for similar Coast Guard acquisitions. The icebreaker Mackinaw, commissioned in 2006 for use on the Great Lakes, took about six years to build. CBO assumes that the new icebreaker would require the same length of time to complete.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: H.R. 1747 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Deborah Reis and Aurora Swanson; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Ryan Miller; Impact on the Private Sector: Jacob Kuipers.

Estimate approved by: Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XXI

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 1747 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, committee reports on a bill or joint resolution of a public character shall include a statement citing the specific powers granted to the Congress in the Constitution to enact the measure. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure finds that Congress has the authority to enact this measure pursuant to its powers granted under article I, section 8 of the Constitution.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (Public Law 104–4).

PREEMPTION CLARIFICATION

Section 423 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the report of any Committee on a bill or joint resolution to include a statement on the extent to which the bill or joint resolution is intended to preempt state, local, or tribal law. The Committee states that H.R. 1747 does not preempt any state, local, or tribal law.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act are created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act (Public Law 104–1).

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

H.R. 1747 makes no changes in existing law.

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