

FISHERIES SURVEY VESSEL AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

—————
JULY 22, 1999.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed
—————

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, from the Committee on Resources,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 2181]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2181) to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to acquire and equip fishery survey vessels, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 2181 is to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to acquire and equip fishery survey vessels.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) maintains a fleet of 16 oceanographic, fishery research, and hydrographic vessels which provide the agency with 3,500 days at sea. Most of these vessels are reaching the end of their useful life, and NOAA has been studying how to meet its ship-based data collection needs for over a decade. In 1993, NOAA prepared an ambitious 15-year fleet replacement and modernization plan as required by Congress. That plan had an estimated cost of \$1.9 billion. No funds were ever requested to implement that plan. Funding realities have led NOAA to reconsider the comprehensive nature of the 1993 plan.

After a comprehensive review of its fishery survey needs, the agency determined that it needs long-term access to modern fishery survey vessels. Using the same vessels year after year, data can be easily compared to show trends in various fish populations. NOAA also requires vessels with acoustically quiet hulls and

hydroacoustic survey capabilities to make the best possible estimates of fishery populations. Without accurate fishery population data, NOAA is unable to satisfy its fishery management responsibilities under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and various international treaties. The Administration included \$50 million in its Fiscal Year 2000 budget request to construct the first of a new class of fishery survey vessels. The Administration intends to request funds to equip that vessel and to construct a second vessel in its Fiscal Year 2001 budget request.

The average age of NOAA's existing fishery survey vessels is 33 years, and one vessel will be celebrating its 50th year of federal service in 2000. Thirty years is generally considered the commercially useful life of a vessel. A list of NOAA's existing fishery survey vessels follows.

Ship	Home Port	Hull	Length (feet)	Date Launched	Date Commissioned
Townsend Cromwell	Honolulu, HI	steel	163	1963	1975
Miller Freeman	Seattle, WA	steel	215	1967	1974
McArthur	Seattle, WA	steel	175	1965	1966
John H. Cobb	Seattle, WA	wood	93	1950	1950
David Starr Jordan	San Diego, CA	steel	171	1964	1966
Oregon II	Pascagoula, MS	steel	170	1967	1977
Gordon Gunter	Pascagoula, MS	steel	224	1989	1998
Albatross IV	Woods Hole, MA	steel	187	1962	1963
Delaware II	Woods Hole, MA	steel	155	1967	1968

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 2181 was introduced on June 10, 1999, by Congressmen Don Young (R-AK) and Jim Saxton (R-NJ). The bill was referred to the Committee on Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans. On March 18, 1999, the Subcommittee held a hearing on NOAA's Fiscal Year 2000 budget request which included \$51.5 million to acquire a new fishery survey vessel. The Administration testified in support of this request. On June 22, 1999, the Subcommittee met to mark up the bill. H.R. 2181 was ordered favorably reported, without amendment, to the Full Committee by voice vote. On June 30, 1999, the full Resources Committee met to consider the bill. No amendments were offered and H.R. 2181 was then ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by voice vote.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

The short title of H.R. 2181 is the Fisheries Survey Vessel Authorization Act of 1999.

Section 2. Acquisition of fishery survey vessels

Section 2 authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to purchase, lease, lease-purchase, or charter and fully equip with the necessary scientific instrumentation, up to six fishery survey vessels. Each vessel must meet the hull standard for acoustic quietness specified by the International Council for Exploration of the Sea, be capable of staying at sea for 30 continuous days, and be able to conduct fish population studies using a variety of techniques, including hydroacoustics. These ships must also be capable of providing NOAA's fishery managers with the needed data in a timely fashion. This section also authorizes \$60 million in each fiscal year from 2000 through 2005 to acquire the fishery survey vessels. These funds are sufficient to acquire and equip one ship per year.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States grants Congress the authority to enact this bill.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. *Cost of Legislation.* Clause 3(d)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out this bill. However, clause 3(d)(3)(B) of that rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill pre-

pared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

2. *Congressional Budget Act.* As required by clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this bill does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

3. *Government Reform Oversight Findings.* Under clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received no report of oversight findings and recommendations from the Committee on Government Reform on this bill.

4. *Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate.* Under clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for this bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 20, 1999.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2181, the Fisheries Survey Vessel Authorization Act of 1999.

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

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For Dan L. Crippen, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 2181—Fisheries Survey Vessel Authorization Act of 1999

Summary: Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2181 would cost the Federal Government \$235 million over the 2000–2004 period. (An additional \$125 million would be spent after 2004). The bill would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. H.R. 2181 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 2181 would authorize the Secretary of Commerce to acquire, subject to the availability of appropriations, up to six vessels for conducting fishery surveys and other activities. The Secretary could acquire the vessels by purchase, lease, lease-purchase, or charter. For this purpose, the bill would authorize the appropriation of \$60 million for each of fiscal years 2000 through 2005.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 2181 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment). For purposes of this estimate, CBO assumes

that the entire amounts authorized will be appropriated for each year. Outlays are based on historic spending patterns for similar acquisitions.

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Authorization Level	60	60	60	60	60
Estimated Outlays	21	42	54	58	60

Pay-as-you-go considerations: None.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: H.R. 2181 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: Deborah Reis.

Estimate approved by: Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill is not intended to preempt any State, local or tribal law.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

This bill makes no changes in existing law.