

AUTHORIZATION OF HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES SPECIFIC
TO THE ARCTIC

JULY 20, 2011.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, from the Committee on Natural
Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 295]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 295) to amend the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 to authorize funds to acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services specific to the Arctic for safe navigation, delineating the United States extended continental shelf, and the monitoring and description of coastal changes, 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. 295 is to amend the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 to authorize funds to acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services specific to the Arctic for safe navigation, delineating the United States extended continental shelf, and the monitoring and description of coastal changes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Hydrographic surveys support a variety of maritime functions including safe navigation, port and harbor maintenance (dredging), coastal engineering (beach erosion and replenishment), coastal zone management, and offshore resource development. Data collected through surveys show water depth (bathymetry) and object detection. These surveys can also provide information on sea-floor texture and composition (sand, mud, and rocks) to assist in anchoring,

dredging, marine construction, pipeline and cable routing, tsunamis, and storm surge modeling. Hydrographic surveys can also support other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) missions including fish habitat characterization, bottom type classification, and submerged cultural resources management.

NOAA currently has the resources, between in-house and contract vessels, to conduct hydrographic surveys for 3,000 square nautical miles a year. This equates to less than 1 percent of Navigationally Significant area surveyed each year. At this pace, the Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) concluded that it would take 166 years to survey just the areas routinely transited by federal, commercial and recreational vessels. NOAA's goal is to achieve the capacity to survey and process 10,000 square nautical miles annually. The HSRP reports that this would put the Navigationally Significant areas on a 50-year resurvey cycle—an inadequate, but achievable, survey schedule.

NOAA is also required to survey the 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline. NOAA's Shoreline Mapping budget has been relatively static for many years, hindering NOAA's mapping efforts. NOAA currently maps only 3 percent of the 95,000 miles of U.S. open shoreline a year. NOAA and its contractors can evaluate and remap only 12 percent of priority port area shoreline annually, short of NOAA's 20 percent program target. Forty percent of the U.S. shoreline has not been mapped by NOAA since 1960.

Limited survey work has occurred in the Arctic. According to testimony given by NOAA, most Arctic waters that are charted were surveyed with obsolete technology, some dating back to the 1800s. In addition, the northern and western coasts of Alaska have not been mapped since 1960, if ever, and confidence in the region's nautical charts is extremely low.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 295 was introduced on January 12, 2011, by Congressman Don Young (R-AK). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs. On May 12, 2011, the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs held a hearing on the bill. On June 15, 2011, the Full Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs was discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered, and the bill was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

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 Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. Cost of Legislation. Clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a compari-

son by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out this bill. However, clause 3(d)(2)(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 prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. 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:

H.R. 295—A bill to amend the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 to authorize funds to acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services specific to the Arctic for safe navigation, delineating the United States extended continental shelf, and the monitoring and description of coastal changes

H.R. 295 would authorize the appropriation of \$7 million in each of fiscal years 2012 and 2013 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conduct certain hydrographic activities (the measurement and description of features that affect maritime navigation). Enacting H.R. 295 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Public Law 110–386 authorized the appropriation of \$182 million for fiscal year 2012 for NOAA to carry out hydrographic activities. H.R. 295 would authorize NOAA to use a portion (\$7 million) of those amounts in 2012 to carry out certain hydrographic activities in the Arctic. Spending of those amounts would have no impact on the federal budget because it would not increase amounts that are authorized to be appropriated under current law.

The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$7 million in fiscal year 2013 to carry out hydrographic activities in the Arctic. CBO estimates that implementing that provision would cost \$7 million over the 2013–2016 period, assuming appropriation of the authorized amount.

H.R. 295 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jeff LaFave. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

2. Section 308(a) of 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 spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures. The bill would authorize the appropriation of \$7 million in fiscal year 2013 to carry out hydrographic activities in the Arctic. CBO estimates that implementing that provision would cost \$7 million over the 2013–2016 period, assuming appropriation of the authorized amount. Enacting H.R. 295 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

3. General Performance Goals and Objectives. The performance goals and objectives of H.R. 295 are to amend the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 to authorize funds to acquire hy-

drographic data and provide hydrographic services specific to the Arctic for safe navigation, delineating the United States extended continental shelf, and the monitoring and description of coastal changes.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

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

If enacted, this bill would make no changes in existing law.

