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[H.R. 1531, Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, July 7, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1531](#), *the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 1531 was introduced on March 23, 2015, by Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA) and was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, which ordered the bill reported, by voice vote, on March 25, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1531 authorizes qualifying employees serving under time-limited appointments in federal land management agencies to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures in the same manner as other permanent federal employees.

The bill defines “land management agency” as the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and the following component agencies of the United States Department of the Interior: Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Reclamation. A time-limited appointment includes a temporary or term appointment as defined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The bill creates three conditions a time-limited employee must meet to be eligible to compete for a permanent appointment through internal merit promotion procedures: (1) the applicant must have had an initial competitive appointment to a land management agency; (2) the applicant must have served one or more temporary appointments with that agency for at least two years without a break of two or more years; and, (3) the applicant must have had an acceptable level of performance.

The bill also authorizes OPM, or other examining agency, to waive age requirements in determining the eligibility of a time-limited employee for appointment to the competitive service unless the requirement is essential to perform the duties of the vacant permanent position.

BACKGROUND

Federal agencies are authorized to make temporary appointments to fill positions that do not require an employee’s services on a permanent basis. According to OPM “. . . a temporary appointment can

be used to fill a position that is not expected to last more than one year, or to meet an employment need that is scheduled to be terminated within one or two years for reasons such as an agency's reorganization or abolishment, or the completion of a specific project or peak workload."¹ However, although many individuals work in temporary appointments for extended periods of time, such employees "irrespective of experience, are not eligible to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures."²

According to the bill sponsor, "The current barrier to competition placed on our nation's permanent and temporary seasonal employees demoralizes this dedicated and courageous corps of workers that serve in our land management agencies, increases attrition, and ultimately leads to higher training costs and a less experienced and capable workforce . . . Our bipartisan legislation would put them on equal footing with other Federal employees with respect to competing for vacant jobs in the civil service, including permanent seasonal jobs."³

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing H.R. 1531 would have no significant effect on the federal budget and "would not change the total number of federal jobs available or the salaries paid to federal employees." Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.

¹ See [House Report 114-182](#) at 2

² Id. at 2

³ See Press Release—" [Connolly Bill to Provide a Pathway for Seasonal Federal Workers To Compete for Vacant Permanent Jobs Passes House Committee](#)," March 26, 2015.