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[H.R. 1214, National Forest Small Tracts Act Amendments Act of 2015, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Wednesday, September 16, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1214](#), *the National Forest Small Tracts Act Amendments Act of 2015, as amended*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 1214 was introduced on March 3, 2015 by Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV) and was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition, to the Committee on Agriculture. The Natural Resources Committee ordered the bill to be reported by unanimous consent on April 30, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1214 expands the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to sell or exchange small parcels of National Forest System land to enhance the management of the National Forest System. The bill allows for the sale of small isolated parcels as well as parcels encumbered with certain special uses, such as cemeteries. Proceeds from the sale of National Forest System lands would be deposited in an account to be used for acquisition of lands for administrative sites or recreational access, to address deferred maintenance for administrative sites or recreational access or to reimburse the agency for administrative costs for preparing the sales.¹

BACKGROUND

The Small Tracts Act authorizes the Forest Service to sell or exchange parcels of land meeting certain criteria. H.R. 1214 increases the cap on the value of lands eligible to be sold under the Act from \$150,000 to \$500,000 and expands conveyance authority for certain small isolated parcels. The bill also allows the Forest Service to dispose of land on which encumbrances contribute to property with low market values.²

According to the Committee, the benefits of expanded small parcel conveyance authority include the ability to: (1) sell parcels under 40 acres that are isolated, inaccessible, and are difficult to administer; (2) convey small parcels currently authorized under special use permits of a long-term nature with

¹ [House Report 114-140](#), Part 1, at 2.

² See [CBO score](#)

accompanying potential liability issues, like cemeteries, landfills, and sewage treatment facilities; (3) reduce efforts spent addressing individual legislative proposals needed to address these issues; (4) resolve certain encroachments of permanent, habitable structures which cannot readily be resolved under existing authorities; and (5) retain sale proceeds which can be used for deferred maintenance for recreational access and administrative sites, to acquire lands for recreational access or administrative sites, or to reimburse for administrative costs of preparing competitive sales (acquisitions would be proponent funded for non-competitive sales).³

The Forest Service indicated to the Committee that the agency has sold off only 20 acres in 2014 and that with the updates included in HR 1214, the number would increase to between 2,000 and 3,000 acres annually. These land sales would result in reduced costs for the agency due to more efficient management by eliminating isolated parcels of federal land.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that enacting H.R. 1214 would increase offsetting receipts, which are treated as reductions in direct spending, by about \$1 million over the 2016 to 2025 period. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

STAFF CONTACT

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

³ [House Report 114-140](#), Part 1, at 2 and 3.