

[H.R. 1554, Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act of 2015](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Wednesday, September 16, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1554](#), *the Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act of 2015*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 1554 was introduced on March 23, 2015 by Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO) and was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, which ordered the bill reported by unanimous consent on July 9, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1554 requires the U.S. Forest Service to convey 148 acres of land with disputed title in the White River National Forest (WRNF) in Colorado to a private entity. The bill allows the federal government to continue collecting rent and royalty payments from an existing federal oil and gas lease on the land; however, if the lease expires, it precludes the Bureau of Land Management from reoffering for lease any of the land subject to the bill.

BACKGROUND

H.R. 1554 corrects a discrepancy in a survey conducted in 1949 that inappropriately resulted in the inclusion of 148 acres of land within the boundaries of the WRNF. In 2014, the Surveyor of the WRNF recommended a “legislative boundary correction protecting bona fide rights” in order to correct the survey discrepancy and ensure that the area is re-patented to the appropriate private landowner.¹ As a result of the recommendation, the Forest Supervisor recommended that the area be “confirmed in the successors in interest to the original patentees” and admitted that “the White River National Forest does not currently manage the 148 acres as National Forest land.”² The Supervisor also stated that the conveyance would not “have any meaningful impact on the goals that Congress intended to impose when it designated the boundaries of the White River National Forest.”³

¹ [House Report 114-257](#) at 2.

² Id.

³ Id.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that enacting H.R. 1554 would reduce receipts by less than \$500,000 over the 2022 to 2025 period.

STAFF CONTACT

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