

SINKHOLE MAPPING ACT OF 2021

DECEMBER 30, 2022.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 3681]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 3681) to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 3681 is to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

H.R. 3681 would direct the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to establish a program to study the short and long-term causes of sinkholes, including extreme weather events, prolonged droughts, shifts in water management practices, aquifer depletion, and other changes in water use. This legislation also directs USGS to develop maps depicting geographic zones at greater risk of forming sinkholes and establish a public website that displays maps and other relevant information for use by community planners and emergency managers. The Sinkhole Mapping Act does not include any additional funding for USGS to establish the program. Last Congress, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated the cost of this legislation to be \$4 million over five years.¹

¹ Congressional Budget Office, Cost Estimate, H.R. 496, Sinkhole Mapping Act of 2019, March 10, 2020, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2020-03/hr496.pdf>.

Sinkholes occur when water erodes underlying bedrock, creating a depression or hole in the ground. They often occur in areas underlain by limestone, a type of rock more easily dissolved by water. They are common in Florida, Texas, Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. Because there is no database for sinkholes in the United States, we do not have data on how many sinkholes form each year, but USGS estimates that damage from sinkholes costs at least \$300 million annually.²

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 3681 was introduced on June 1, 2021, by Representative Darren Soto (D-FL). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. On July 19, 2022, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill. On December 8, 2022, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous consent. The bill was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held on July 19, 2022.

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 AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of 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 and with respect to requirements of clause (3)(c)(3) and clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received a cost estimate for this bill from the Director of Congressional Budget Office. The Committee adopts as its own cost estimate the forthcoming cost estimate of the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, should such cost estimate be made available before House passage of the bill. The Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a statement as to whether this bill contains any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

²United States Geological Survey, "How much does sinkhole damage cost each year in the United States?" https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-much-does-sinkhole-damage-cost-each-year-united-states?qt-news_science_products=3#qt-news_science_products.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation.

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.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

An estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the *Congressional Record* upon its receipt by the Committee, if such estimate is not publicly available on the Congressional Budget Office website.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

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

SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS

None.