

Calendar No. 149

119TH CONGRESS }
1st Session

SENATE

{ REPORT
119-61

CONTAMINATED WELLS RELOCATION ACT

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 606



SEPTEMBER 8, 2025.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

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Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 606]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 606) to authorize the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to reimburse the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, for costs directly associated with the removal and replacement of certain drinking water wells, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 606 is to authorize the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Administrator to reimburse Chincoteague, Virginia, for costs related to replacing specific drinking water wells.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

The Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, has been addressing drinking water contamination issues stemming from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) detected in its wells located on NASA's Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) property. These PFAS, sometimes referred to as forever chemicals, were introduced into the environment through firefighting foam used during training exercises and aircraft fire responses between the late 1970s and 1998, when the WFF site was under U.S. Navy control.¹ In 2017, PFAS were detected in several of Chincoteague's drinking water wells, prompt-

¹“Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances at NASA Wallops,” NASA, April 24, 2024, <https://www.nasa.gov/wallops/pfas/>.

ing NASA to halt pumping from these sources and provide the town with treated water from its own system. By April 2021, NASA had implemented a groundwater treatment system utilizing granular activated carbon to remove PFAS, ensuring the town's drinking water met Environmental Protection Agency standards.²

To establish a permanent solution, Chincoteague purchased land south of Wallops Island for relocating its wells. However, NASA requires specific legislative authority to reimburse the town for relocation costs.³

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 606, the Contaminated Wells Relocation Act, was introduced on February 18, 2025, by Senator Kaine (for himself and Senator Warner) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. On April 30, 2025, the Committee met in open Executive Session and, by voice vote, ordered S. 606 reported favorably without amendment.

H.R. 1419, a House companion bill to S. 606, was introduced on February 18, 2025, by Representative Kiggans (for herself and Representative Subramanyam) and was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.

118th Congress

S. 5300, the Contaminated Wells Relocation Act, was introduced on November 12, 2024, by Senator Kaine (for himself and Senator Warner) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. On December 16, 2024, S. 5300 passed the Senate without amendment by unanimous consent.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

²“NASA’s Efforts to Address PFAS Are Making a Difference,” NASA, July 2023, <https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/walloppfas-july2023.pdf>.

³Office of U.S. Representative Jen Kiggans, “Kiggans Fights to Provide Safe Drinking Water to Chincoteague,” February 20, 2025, <https://kiggans.house.gov/posts/kiggans-fights-to-provide-safe-drinking-water-to-chincoteague>.

At a Glance

NASA Legislation

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on April 30, 2025

On April 30, 2025, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation ordered 17 bills to be reported. This document provides estimates for the 3 of those bills that would affect the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

CBO estimates that S. 606 would increase spending subject to appropriation by \$18 million over the 2025-2030 period. S. 1081 and S. 1437 would each increase spending subject to appropriation by less than \$500,000 over the 2025-2030 period, CBO estimates.

None of the bills would increase direct spending or revenues; thus, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that none of the bills would increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036.

None of the bills contain intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Bill	Net Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit Over the 2025-2035 Period (Millions of Dollars)	Changes in Spending Subject to Appropriation Over the 2025-2030 Period (Outlays, Millions of Dollars)	Mandate Effects?
S. 606	0	18	No
S. 1081	0	*	No
S. 1437	0	*	No

* = between zero and \$500,000.

Summary of legislation: On April 30, 2025, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation ordered 17 bills to be reported. This document provides estimates for 3 of those bills, specified below:

- S. 606 would allow the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to enter into an agreement to reimburse the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, for relocating wells for drinking water from NASA-administered property to the town.
- S. 1081 would expand NASA's requirements for reporting to the Congress.
- S. 1437 would require NASA to establish a program to collect and disseminate remote-sensing data and to report to the Congress on that program.

Estimated Federal cost: The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 250 (general science, space, and technology).

Basis of estimate: For this estimate, CBO assumes that each bill will be enacted near the end of fiscal year 2025 and that the estimated amounts will be available each year. This cost estimate does not include any effects of interactions among the bills. If all three bills were combined and enacted as a single piece of legislation, the effects could be different from the sum of the separate estimates, although CBO expects that any differences would be small.

S. 606, the Contaminated Wells Relocation Act, would authorize the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to enter into an agreement with the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, to reimburse the costs of removing and relocating three wells for drinking water that are currently located on property administered by NASA. The bill would require NASA to submit the agreement to the Congress within 18 months of enactment. Using information from the agency on the historical cost for similar activities and ad-

justing for inflation, CBO estimates that the agreement would cost \$18 million over the 2025–2030 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

S. 1081, the Comprehensive NASA Reporting Act of 2025, would require the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to provide the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with copies of any final reports or notifications that it submits to any other Congressional committee or office within 10 days of the original submission. The bill also would require NASA to provide to the Congress a copy of any international agreement involving outer space activities within 15 days of the United States becoming a signatory to that agreement. Based on the cost of similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing the bill’s reporting requirements would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2025–2030 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

S. 1437, the ASCEND Act, would codify the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition pilot program, which identifies commercial sources for acquiring remote-sensing data and imagery of the Earth. Data collected would be disseminated internally, to other federal agencies, and to researchers. The bill would require NASA to report to the Congress within 180 days of enactment and annually thereafter on all agreements established under the program. Based on the cost of similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing the bill’s reporting requirements would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2025–2030 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Pay-As-You-Go considerations: The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. None of the bills would affect direct spending or revenues; thus, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Increase in long-term net direct spending and deficits: CBO estimates that enacting S. 606, S. 1081, and S. 1437 would not increase net direct spending or deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036.

Mandates: None of the bills contain intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Estimate prepared by: Federal costs: Willow Latham-Proença; Mandates: Brandon Lever.

Estimate reviewed by: Ann E. Futrell, Chief, Natural and Physical Resources Cost Estimates Unit; Kathleen FitzGerald, Chief, Public and Private Mandates Unit; H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

Estimate approved by: Phillip L. Swagel, Director, Congressional Budget Office.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported:

Number of Persons Covered

S. 606 would authorize NASA to reimburse the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, to remove and replace drinking water wells that were contaminated by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. Chincoteague, Virginia, has an estimated population of about 3,200 citizens that may have been impacted by the water wells relocation and remediation efforts.

Economic Impact

S. 606 is not expected to have an adverse impact on the Nation's economy. The legislation would authorize NASA to negotiate and fund the well relocation.

Privacy

S. 606 would not impact the personal privacy of individuals.

Paperwork

The Committee anticipates a negligible increase in paperwork burdens. S. 606 would require the Administrator of NASA to submit a water wells relocation plan to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives within 18 months of enactment. The Committee does not anticipate paperwork burdens for private individuals or businesses resulting from the passage of this legislation.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

In compliance with paragraph 4(b) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides that no provisions contained in the bill, as reported, meet the definition of congressionally directed spending items under the rule.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title.

This section would provide that the bill may be cited as the "Contaminated Wells Relocation Act".

Section 2. Drinking water well replacement for Chincoteague, Virginia.

This section would authorize the NASA Administrator to enter into an agreement with the Town of Chincoteague, Virginia, to reimburse the town for the costs associated with removing and relocating contaminated drinking water wells currently administered by NASA for a period of up to 5 years. An agreement would be required to include a provision for the removal and relocation of three remaining wells; a description of the location where the wells will be relocated to; and a current estimated cost. It would require NASA to submit the agreement to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives within 18 months of the law's enactment.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee states that the bill as reported would make no change to existing law.

