

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4724

To amend the National Trails System Act to designate El Camino Real de los Tejas as a National Historic Trail.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 7, 1998

Mr. RODRIGUEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To amend the National Trails System Act to designate El Camino Real de los Tejas as a National Historic Trail.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “El Camino Real de
5 los Tejas National Historic Trail Act of 1998”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) El Camino Real de los Tejas (the Royal
9 Road to the Tejas), served as the primary route be-
10 tween the Spanish viceregal capital of Mexico City

1 and the Spanish provincial capital of Tejas at Los
2 Adaes (1721–1773) and San Antonio (1773–1821);

3 (2) the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nine-
4 teenth century rivalries among the European colo-
5 nial powers of Spain, France, and England and after
6 their independence, Mexico and the United States,
7 for dominion over lands fronting the Gulf of Mexico,
8 were played out along the evolving travel routes in
9 this immense area;

10 (3) the future of several American Indian na-
11 tions, whose prehistoric trails were later used by the
12 Spaniards for exploration and colonization, was tied
13 to these larger forces and events and the nations
14 were fully involved in and affected by the complex
15 cultural interactions that ensued;

16 (4) the Old San Antonio Road was a series of
17 routes established in the early 19th century sharing
18 the same corridor and some routes of El Camino
19 Real, and carried American immigrants from the
20 east, contributing to the formation of the Republic
21 of Texas, and its annexation to the United States;

22 (5) the exploration, conquest, colonization, set-
23 tlement, migration, military occupation, religious
24 conversion, and cultural exchange that occurred in a
25 large area of the borderland was facilitated by El

1 Camino Real de los Tejas as it carried Spanish and
2 Mexican influences northeastward, and by its succes-
3 sor, the Old San Antonio Road, which carried Amer-
4 ican influence westward, during a historic period
5 which extended from 1689 to 1850; and

6 (6) the portions of El Camino Real de los Tejas
7 in what is now the United States extended from the
8 Rio Grande near Eagle Pass and Laredo, Texas and
9 involved routes that changed through time, that
10 total almost 2,600 miles in combined length, gen-
11 erally coursing northeasterly through San Antonio,
12 Bastrop, Nacogdoches, and San Augustine in Texas
13 to Natchitoches, Louisiana, a general corridor dis-
14 tance of 550 miles.

15 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.**

16 Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act (16
17 U.S.C. 1244(a) is amended—

18 (1) by designating the paragraphs relating to
19 the California National Historic Trail, the Pony Ex-
20 press National Historic Trail, and the Selma to
21 Montgomery National Historic Trail as paragraphs
22 (18), (19), and (20), respectively; and

23 (2) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(22) EL CAMINO REAL DE LOS TEJAS.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—El Camino Real de los
2 Tejas (The Royal Road to the Tejas) National
3 Historic Trail, a combination of routes totaling
4 2,580 miles in length from the Rio Grande near
5 Eagle Pass and Laredo, Texas to Natchitoches,
6 Louisiana, and including the Old San Antonio
7 Road, as generally depicted on the maps enti-
8 tled ‘El Camino Real de los Tejas’, contained in
9 the report prepared pursuant to subsection (b)
10 entitled ‘National Historic Trail Feasibility
11 Study and Environmental Assessment: El Ca-
12 mino Real de los Tejas, Texas-Louisiana’, dated
13 July 1998. A map generally depicting the trail
14 shall be on file and available for public inspec-
15 tion in the Office of the National Park Service,
16 Department of the Interior. The trail shall be
17 administered by the Secretary of the Interior.
18 No land or interest in land outside the exterior
19 boundaries of any federally administered area
20 may be acquired by the United States for the
21 trail except with the consent of the owner of the
22 land or interest in land.

23 “(B) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES.—The
24 Secretary of the Interior may coordinate with
25 United States and Mexican public and non-gov-

1 ernmental organizations, academic institutions,
2 and, in consultation with the Secretary of State,
3 the government of Mexico and its political sub-
4 divisions, for the purpose of exchanging trail in-
5 formation and research, fostering trail preserva-
6 tion and educational programs, providing tech-
7 nical assistance, and working to establish an
8 international historic trail with complementary
9 preservation and education programs in each
10 nation.”.

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