

Public Law 104-163  
104th Congress

An Act

July 19, 1996

[H.R. 1508]

National  
Children's Island  
Act of 1995.

To require the transfer of title to the District of Columbia of certain real property in Anacostia Park to facilitate the construction of National Children's Island, a cultural, educational, and family-oriented park.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "National Children's Island Act of 1995".

**SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

For the purposes of this Act:

(1) The term "plat" means the plat filed in the Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia under S.O. 92-252.

(2) The term "District" means the District of Columbia.

(3) The term "Islands" means Heritage Island and all of that portion of Kingman Island located south of Benning Road and within the District of Columbia and the Anacostia River, being a portion of United States Reservation 343, Section F, as specified and legally described on the Survey.

(4) The term "National Children's Island" means a cultural, educational, and family-oriented recreation park, together with a children's playground, to be developed and operated in accordance with the Children's Island Development Plan Act of 1993, D.C. Act 10-110.

(5) The term "playground" means the children's playground that is part of National Children's Island and includes all lands on the Islands located south of East Capitol Street.

(6) The term "recreation park" means the cultural, educational, and family-oriented recreation park that is part of National Children's Island.

(7) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(8) The term "Survey" means the ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey prepared by Dewberry & Davis and dated February 12, 1994.

**SEC. 3. PROPERTY TRANSFER.**

(a) **TRANSFER OF TITLE.**—In order to facilitate the construction, development, and operation of National Children's Island, the Secretary shall, not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act and subject to this Act, transfer by quitclaim deed, without consideration, to the District all right, title, and interest

of the United States in and to the Islands. Unbudgeted actual costs incurred by the Secretary for such transfer shall be borne by the District. The District may seek reimbursement from any third party for such costs.

(b) GRANT OF EASEMENTS.—(1) The Secretary shall, not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act, grant, without consideration, to the District, permanent easements across the waterways and bed of the Anacostia River as described in the Survey as Leased Riverbed Areas A, B, C, and D, and across the shoreline of the Anacostia River as depicted on the plat map recorded in the Office of the Surveyor of the District as S.O. 92-252.

(2) Easements granted under paragraph (1) shall run with the land and shall be for the purposes of—

(A) constructing, reconstructing, maintaining, operating, and otherwise using only such bridges, roads, and other improvements as are necessary or desirable for vehicular and pedestrian egress and ingress to and from the Islands and which satisfy the District Building Code and applicable safety requirements;

(B) installing, reinstalling, maintaining, and operating utility transmission corridors, including (but not limited to) all necessary electricity, water, sewer, gas, necessary or desirable for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and operation of the Islands and any and all improvements located thereon from time to time; and

(C) constructing, reconstructing, maintaining, operating, and otherwise providing necessary informational kiosk, ticketing booth, and security for the Islands.

(3) Easements granted under paragraph (1) shall be assignable by the District to any lessee, sublessee, or operator, or any combination thereof, of the Islands.

(c) DEVELOPMENT.—The development of National Children's Island shall proceed as specified in paragraph 3 of the legend on the plat or as otherwise authorized by the District by agreement, lease, resolution, appropriate executive action, or otherwise.

(d) REVERSION.—(1) The transfer under subsection (a) and the grant of easements under subsection (b) shall be subject to the condition that the Islands only be used for the purposes of National Children's Island. Title in the property transferred under subsection (a) and the easements granted under subsection (b), shall revert to the United States 60 days after the date on which the Secretary provides written notice of the reversion to the District based on the Secretary's determination, which shall be made in accordance with chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code (relating to administrative procedures), that one of the following has occurred:

(A) Failure to commence improvements in the recreational park within the earlier of—

(i) three years after building permits are obtained for construction of such improvements; or

(ii) four years after title has been transferred, as provided in subsection (a).

(B) Failure to commence operation of the recreation park within the earlier of—

(i) five years after building permits are obtained for construction of such improvements; or

(ii) seven years after title has been transferred, as provided in subsection (a).

(C) After completion of construction and commencement of operation, the abandonment or non-use of the recreation park for a period of two years.

(D) After completion of construction and commencement of operation, conversion of the Islands to a use other than that specified in this Act or conversion to a parking use not in accordance with section 4(b).

(2) The periods referred to in paragraph (1) shall be extended during the pendency of any lawsuit which seeks to enjoin the development or operation of National Children's Island or the administrative process leading to such development or operation.

(3) Following any reconveyance or reversion to the National Park Service, any and all claims and judgments arising during the period the District holds title to the Islands, the playground, and premises shall remain the responsibility of the District, and such reconveyance or reversion shall extinguish any and all leases, rights or privileges to the Islands and the playground granted by the District.

(4) The District shall require any nongovernmental entity authorized to construct, develop, and operate National Children's Island to establish an escrow fund, post a surety bond, provide a letter of credit or otherwise provide such security for the benefit of the National Park Service, substantially equivalent to that specified in paragraph 11 of the legend on the plat, to serve as the sole source of funding for restoration of the recreation park to a condition suitable for National Park Service purposes (namely, the removal of all buildings and grading, seeding and landscaping of the recreation park) upon reversion of the property. If, on the date which is two years from the date of reversion of the property, the National Park Service has not commenced restoration or is not diligently proceeding with such restoration, any amount in the escrow fund shall be distributed to such nongovernmental entity.

#### **SEC. 4. PROVISIONS RELATING TO LANDS TRANSFERRED AND EASEMENTS GRANTED.**

(a) **PLAYGROUND.**—Operation of the recreation park may only commence simultaneously with or subsequent to improvement and opening of a children's playground at National Children's Island that is available to the public free of charge. The playground shall only include those improvements traditionally or ordinarily included in a publicly maintained children's playground. Operation of the recreation park is at all times dependent on the continued maintenance of the children's playground.

(b) **PUBLIC PARKING.**—Public parking on the Islands is prohibited, except for handicapped parking, emergency and government vehicles, and parking related to constructing, and servicing National Children's Island.

(c) **REQUIRED APPROVALS.**—Before construction commences, the final design plans for the recreation park and playground, and all related structures, including bridges and roads, are subject to the review and approval of the National Capital Planning Commission and of the District of Columbia in accordance with the Children's Island Development Plan Act of 1993 (D.C. Act 10-110). The District of Columbia shall carry out its review of

this project in full compliance with all applicable provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

**SEC. 5. EFFECT OF PROPERTY TRANSFER.**

(a) **EFFECT OF PROPERTY TRANSFER.**—Upon the transfer of the Islands to the District pursuant to this Act:

(1) The Transfer of Jurisdiction concerning the Islands from the National Park Service to the District dated February 1993, as set out on the plat map recorded in the Office of the Surveyor of the District as S.O. 92-252 and as approved by the Council of the District by Resolution 10-91, shall become null and void and of no further force and effect, except for the references in this Act to paragraphs 3 and 11 of the legend on the plat.

(2) The Islands shall no longer be considered to be part of Anacostia Park and shall not be considered to be within the park system of the District; therefore, the provisions of section 2 of the Act entitled “An Act to vest in the Commissioners of the District of Columbia control of street parking in said District”, approved July 1, 1898 (ch. 543, 30 Stat. 570; D.C. Code 8-104), shall not apply to the Islands, and the District shall have exclusive charge and control over the Islands and easements transferred.

(3) The Islands shall cease to be a reservation, park, or public grounds of the United States for the purposes of the Act of August 24, 1912 (ch. 355, 37 Stat. 444; 40 U.S.C. 68; 8-128 D.C. Code).

(b) **USE OF CERTAIN LANDS FOR PARKING AND OTHER PURPOSES.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the District is hereby authorized to grant via appropriate instrument to a non-governmental individual or entity any and all of its rights to use the lands currently being leased by the United States to the District pursuant to the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 (Public Law 85-300, September 7, 1957, 71 Stat. 619) for parking facilities (and necessary informational kiosk, ticketing booth, and security) as the Mayor of the District in his discretion may determine necessary or appropriate in connection with or in support of National Children’s Island.

**SEC. 6. SAVINGS PROVISIONS.**

No provision of this Act shall be construed—

(1) as an express or implied endorsement or approval by the Congress of any such construction, development, or operation of National Children's Island;

(2) except as provided in section 5, to exempt the recreational park and playground from the laws of the United States or the District, including laws relating to the environment, health, and safety; or

(3) to prevent additional conditions on the National Children's Island development or operation to mitigate adverse impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods and park lands and the Anacostia River.

Approved July 19, 1996.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1508:**

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 104-277, Pt. 1 (Comm. on Resources).

**CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:**

Vol. 141 (1995): Oct. 30, considered and passed House.

Vol. 142 (1996): June 28, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 32 (1996):

July 19, Presidential statement.