

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2409

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 30, 1999

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

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## 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 1999”.

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 suc-  
3 cessor, the Old San Antonio Road, which carried  
4 American influence westward, during a historic pe-  
5 riod 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          Designation of El Camino Real de los Tejas  
19          does not itself confer any additional authority  
20          to apply other existing Federal laws and regula-  
21          tions on non-Federal lands along the trail.  
22          Laws or regulations requiring public entities  
23          and agencies to take into consideration a na-  
24          tional historic trail shall continue to apply not-  
25          withstanding the foregoing. On non-Federal

lands, the national historic trail shall be established only when landowners voluntarily request certification of their sites and segments of the trail consistent with section 3(a)(3) of this Act. Notwithstanding section 7(g), the United States is authorized to acquire privately-owned real property or an interest in such property for purposes of the trail only with the willing consent of the owner of such property and shall have no authority to condemn or otherwise appropriate privately-owned real property or an interest in such property for the purposes of such trail.

“(B) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of the Interior may coordinate with United States and Mexican public and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Government of Mexico and its political subdivisions, for the purpose of exchanging trail information and research, fostering trail preservation and educational programs, providing technical assistance, and working to establish an international historic trail with complementary

- 1 preservation and education programs in each
- 2 nation.”.

