

Public Law 106-32  
106th Congress

An Act

To declare a portion of the James River and Kanawha Canal in Richmond, Virginia, to be nonnavigable waters of the United States for purposes of title 46, United States Code, and the other maritime laws of the United States.

June 1, 1999  
[H.R. 1034]

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

**SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

33 USC 59ii note.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The canal known as the James River and Kanawha Canal played an important part in the economic development of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Richmond.

(2) The canal ceased to operate as a functioning waterway in the conduct of commerce in the late 1800s.

(3) Portions of the canal have been found by a Federal district court to be nonnavigable.

(4) The restored portion of the canal will be utilized to provide entertainment and education to visitors and will play an important part in the economic development of downtown Richmond.

(5) The restored portion of the canal will not be utilized for general public boating, and will be restricted to activities similar to those conducted on similar waters in San Antonio, Texas.

(6) The continued classification of the canal as a navigable waterway based upon historic usage that ceased more than 100 years ago does not serve the public interest and is unnecessary to protect public safety.

(7) Congressional action is required to clarify that the canal is no longer to be considered a navigable waterway for purposes of subtitle II of title 46, United States Code.

**SEC. 2. DECLARATION OF NONNAVIGABILITY OF A PORTION OF THE CANAL KNOWN AS THE JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.**

33 USC 59ii.

(a) CANAL DECLARED NONNAVIGABLE.—The portion of the canal known as the James River and Kanawha Canal in Richmond, Virginia, located between the Great Ship Lock on the east and the limits of the City of Richmond on the west is hereby declared to be a nonnavigable waterway of the United States for purposes of subtitle II of title 46, United States Code.

(b) ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY.—The Secretary of Transportation shall provide such technical advice, information, and assistance as the City of Richmond, Virginia, or its designee may request

to insure that the vessels operating on the waters declared nonnavigable by subsection (a) are built, maintained, and operated in a manner consistent with protecting public safety.

(c) TERMINATION OF DECLARATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation may terminate the effectiveness of the declaration made by subsection (a) by publishing a determination that vessels operating on the waters declared nonnavigable by subsection (a) have not been built, maintained, and operated in a manner consistent with protecting public safety.

(2) PUBLIC INPUT.—Before making a determination under this subsection, the Secretary of Transportation shall—

(A) consult with appropriate State and local government officials regarding whether such a determination is necessary to protect public safety and will serve the public interest; and

(B) provide to persons who might be adversely affected by the determination the opportunity for comment and a hearing on whether such action is necessary to protect public safety and will serve the public interest.

Approved June 1, 1999.

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1034:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 106-107 (Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure).  
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 145 (1999):

Apr. 27, considered and passed House.  
May 26, considered and passed Senate.

