

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Act Feb. 14, 1903, transferred National Bureau of Standards from Treasury Department to Department of Commerce and Labor.

APPROPRIATION

A sum sufficient to carry out the provisions of this section was appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated by act Mar. 3, 1881.

DISTRIBUTION TO STATES

The Secretary of the Treasury was directed to cause a complete set of all the weights and measures adopted as standards to be delivered to the governor of each state for the use of the states by Res. June 14, 1836, No. 7, 5 Stat. 133, which provision was not incorporated into the Revised Statutes.

§ 202. Repairs to standards

Such necessary repairs and adjustments shall be made to the standards furnished to the several States and Territories as may be requested by the governors thereof, and also to standard weights and measures that have been or may be supplied to United States customhouses and other offices of the United States under Act of Congress, when requested by the Secretary of Commerce.

(July 11, 1890, ch. 667, §1, 26 Stat. 242; Feb. 14, 1903, ch. 552, §§4, 10, 32 Stat. 826, 829; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, §1, 37 Stat. 736.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Act Mar. 4, 1913, created Department of Labor and renamed Department of Commerce and Labor as Department of Commerce.

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§ 203. Replacing lost standard weights and measures; cost

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized and directed to furnish precise copies of standard weights and measures, bearing the seal of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and accompanied by a suitable certificate, to any State, Territory, or institution heretofore furnished with the same, upon application in writing by the governor in the case of a State or Territory, or by the official head in the case of an institution, setting forth that the copies of standards applied for are to replace similar ones heretofore furnished, in accordance with law, which have been lost or destroyed: *Provided*, That the applicant shall, before the said standards are delivered, first deposit with the Secretary of Commerce the amount of money necessary to defray all expenses incurred by the National Institute of Standards and Technology in furnishing the same, which amount shall be covered into the Treasury of the United States to the credit of miscellaneous receipts as soon as the weights or measures are delivered for transportation into the hands of such persons as are designated by the officers ordering the same.

(Aug. 18, 1894, ch. 301, §1, 28 Stat. 383; Mar. 3, 1901, ch. 872, §1, 31 Stat. 1449; Feb. 14, 1903, ch.

552, §10, 32 Stat. 829; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, §1, 37 Stat. 736; Pub. L. 100-418, title V, §5115(c), Aug. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 1433.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1988—Pub. L. 100-418 substituted “National Institute of Standards and Technology” for “Bureau of Standards” in two places.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Act Mar. 4, 1913, created Department of Labor and renamed Department of Commerce and Labor as Department of Commerce.

Act Mar. 3, 1901, provided that Office of Standard Weights and Measures should thereafter be known as National Bureau of Standards.

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§ 204. Metric system authorized

It shall be lawful throughout the United States of America to employ the weights and measures of the metric system; and no contract or dealing, or pleading in any court, shall be deemed invalid or liable to objection because the weights or measures expressed or referred to therein are weights or measures of the metric system.

(R.S. §3569.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

R.S. §3569 derived from act July 28, 1866, ch. 301, §1, 14 Stat. 339.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

STUDY OF METRIC SYSTEM BY THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Pub. L. 90-472, Aug. 9, 1968, 82 Stat. 693, authorized the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a program of investigation, research, and survey to determine the impact of increasing worldwide use of the metric system on the United States; to appraise the desirability and practicability of increasing the use of metric weights and measures in the United States; to study the feasibility of retaining and promoting by international use of dimensional and other engineering standards based on the customary measurement units of the United States; and to evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action which might be feasible for the United States. The Secretary was directed to submit to the Congress such interim reports as he deemed desirable, and within three years after Aug. 9, 1968, a full and complete report of the findings made under the study, together with such recommendations as he considered to be appropriate and in the best interests of the United States. By its own terms, the Act expired thirty days after the submission of the final report.

§ 205. Metric system defined

The metric system of measurement shall be defined as the International System of Units as established in 1960, and subsequently maintained, by the General Conference of Weights and Measures, and as interpreted or modified for

the United States by the Secretary of Commerce.

(R.S. § 3570; Pub. L. 110-69, title III, § 3013(c)(1), Aug. 9, 2007, 121 Stat. 598.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

R.S. § 3570 derived from act July 28, 1866, ch. 301, § 2, 14 Stat. 339, 340.

AMENDMENTS

2007—Pub. L. 110-69 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section read as follows: “The tables in the schedule annexed shall be recognized in the construction of contracts and in all legal proceedings as establishing, in terms of the weights and measures on June 22, 1874, in use in the United States, the equivalents of the weights and measures expressed therein in terms of the metric system; and the tables may lawfully be used for computing, determining, and expressing in customary weights and measures the weights and measures of the metric system.”

SUBCHAPTER II—METRIC CONVERSION

§ 205a. Congressional statement of findings

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) The United States was an original signatory party to the 1875 Treaty of the Meter (20 Stat. 709), which established the General Conference of Weights and Measures, the International Committee of Weights and Measures and the International Bureau of Weights and Measures.

(2) Although the use of metric measurement standards in the United States has been authorized by law since 1866 (Act of July 28, 1866; 14 Stat. 339), this Nation today is the only industrially developed nation which has not established a national policy of committing itself and taking steps to facilitate conversion to the metric system.

(3) World trade is increasingly geared towards the metric system of measurement.

(4) Industry in the United States is often at a competitive disadvantage when dealing in international markets because of its non-standard measurement system, and is sometimes excluded when it is unable to deliver goods which are measured in metric terms.

(5) The inherent simplicity of the metric system of measurement and standardization of weights and measures has led to major cost savings in certain industries which have converted to that system.

(6) The Federal Government has a responsibility to develop procedures and techniques to assist industry, especially small business, as it voluntarily converts to the metric system of measurement.

(7) The metric system of measurement can provide substantial advantages to the Federal Government in its own operations.

(Pub. L. 94-168, § 2, Dec. 23, 1975, 89 Stat. 1007; Pub. L. 100-418, title V, § 5164(a), Aug. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 1451.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Act of July 28, 1866; 14 Stat. 339, referred to in par. (2), is predecessor of R.S. § 3569 authorizing use of the met-

ric system, which is classified to section 204 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

1988—Pars. (3) to (7). Pub. L. 100-418 added pars. (3) to (7).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

SHORT TITLE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 104-289, § 1, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3411, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 205f of this title, amending sections 205c and 205f of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and section 205c of this title] may be cited as the ‘Savings in Construction Act of 1996’.”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 94-168, § 1, Dec. 23, 1975, 89 Stat. 1007, provided: “That this Act [enacting this subchapter] may be cited as the ‘Metric Conversion Act of 1975’.”

CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENT OF FINDINGS; METRIC CONVERSION IN FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Pub. L. 104-289, § 2, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3411, provided that: “The Congress finds the following:

“(1) The Metric Conversion Act of 1975 [15 U.S.C. 205a et seq.] was enacted in order to set forth the policy of the United States to convert to the metric system. Section 3 of that Act [15 U.S.C. 205b] requires that each Federal agency use the metric system of measurements in its procurement, grants, and other business-related activities, unless that use is likely to cause significant cost or loss of markets to United States firms, such as when foreign competitors are producing competing products in non-metric units.

“(2) In accordance with that Act and Executive Order 12770, of July 25, 1991 [set out below], Federal agencies increasingly construct new Federal buildings in round metric dimensions. As a result, companies that wish to bid on Federal construction projects increasingly are asked to supply materials or products in round metric dimensions.

“(3) While the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 currently provides an exemption to metric usage when impractical or when such usage will cause economic inefficiencies, amendments are warranted to ensure that the use of specific metric components in metric construction projects do not increase the cost of Federal buildings to the taxpayers.”

Executive Documents

EX. ORD. NO. 12770. METRIC USAGE IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Ex. Ord. No. 12770, July 25, 1991, 56 F.R. 35801, provided:

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Metric Conversion Act of 1975, Public Law 94-168 (15 U.S.C. 205a et seq.) (“the Metric Conversion Act”), as amended by section 5164 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, Public Law 100-418 (“the Trade and Competitiveness Act”), and in order to implement the congressional designation of the metric system of measurement as the preferred system of weights and measures for United States trade and commerce, it is hereby ordered as follows:

SECTION 1. *Coordination by the Department of Commerce.*

(a) The Secretary of Commerce (“Secretary”) is designated to direct and coordinate efforts by Federal departments and agencies to implement Government metric usage in accordance with section 3 of the Metric Conversion Act (15 U.S.C. 205b), as amended by section 5164(b) of the Trade and Competitiveness Act.

(b) In furtherance of his duties under this order, the Secretary is authorized: