

107TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1628

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

APRIL 26, 2001

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 2001”.

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 as follows:

18 (1) By designating the paragraph relating to  
19 the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail as para-  
20 graph (21).

21 (2) By adding at the end the following:

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

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—El Camino Real de los  
24 Tejas (The Royal Road to the Tejas) National  
25 Historic Trail, a combination of routes totaling

1 2,580 miles in length from the Rio Grande near  
2 Eagle Pass and Laredo, Texas to Natchitoches,  
3 Louisiana, and including the Old San Antonio  
4 Road, as generally depicted on the maps enti-  
5 tled ‘El Camino Real de los Tejas’, contained in  
6 the report prepared pursuant to subsection (b)  
7 entitled ‘National Historic Trail Feasibility  
8 Study and Environmental Assessment: El Ca-  
9 mino Real de los Tejas, Texas-Louisiana’, dated  
10 July 1998. A map generally depicting the trail  
11 shall be on file and available for public inspec-  
12 tion in the Office of the National Park Service,  
13 Department of the Interior. The trail shall be  
14 administered by the Secretary of the Interior.

15 “(B) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES.—The  
16 Secretary of the Interior may coordinate with  
17 United States and Mexican public and non-gov-  
18 ernmental organizations, academic institutions,  
19 and, in consultation with the Secretary of State,  
20 the government of Mexico and its political sub-  
21 divisions, for the purpose of exchanging trail in-  
22 formation and research, fostering trail preserva-  
23 tion and educational programs, providing tech-  
24 nical assistance, and working to establish an  
25 international historic trail with complementary

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

3 **SEC. 4. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION.**

4           Designation of El Camino Real de los Tejas under  
5 this Act does not itself confer any additional authority to  
6 apply other existing Federal laws and regulations on non-  
7 federal lands along the trail. Laws or regulations requiring  
8 public entities and agencies to take into consideration a  
9 national historic trail shall continue to apply notwith-  
10 standing the foregoing. On non-federal lands, the national  
11 historic trail shall be established only when landowners  
12 voluntarily request certification of their sites and segments  
13 of the trail consistent with section 3(a)(3) of the National  
14 Trails System Act. Notwithstanding section 7(g) of such  
15 Act, the United States is authorized to acquire privately-  
16 owned real property or an interest in such property for  
17 purposes of the trail only with the willing consent of the  
18 owner of such property and shall have no authority to con-  
19 demn or otherwise appropriate privately-owned real prop-  
20 erty or an interest in such property for the purposes of  
21 El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail.

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