

SUBCHAPTER III—GENERAL BRIDGE  
AUTHORITY

**§ 525. Construction and operation of bridges**

**(a) Consent of Congress**

The consent of Congress is granted for the construction, maintenance, and operation of bridges and approaches thereto over the navigable waters of the United States, in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter.

**(b) Approval of plans**

The location and plans for such bridges shall be approved by the Secretary of Transportation before construction is commenced, and, in approving the location and plans of any bridge, the Secretary may impose any specific conditions relating to the maintenance and operation of the structure which the Secretary may deem necessary in the interest of public navigation, and the conditions so imposed shall have the force of law. This subsection shall not apply to any bridge over waters which are not subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and which are not used and are not susceptible to use in their natural condition or by reasonable improvement as a means to transport interstate or foreign commerce.

**(c) Private highway toll bridges**

Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, it shall be unlawful to construct or commence the construction of any privately owned highway toll bridge until the location and plans thereof shall also have been submitted to and approved by the highway department or departments of the State or States in which the bridge and its approaches are situated; and where such bridge shall be between two or more States and the highway departments thereof shall be unable to agree upon the location and plans therefor, or if they, or either of them, shall fail or refuse to act upon the location and plans submitted, such location and plans then shall be submitted to the Secretary of Transportation and, if approved by the Secretary of Transportation, approval by the highway departments shall not be required.

(Aug. 2, 1946, ch. 753, title V, §502, 60 Stat. 847; June 30, 1949, ch. 288, title I, §103(a), 63 Stat. 380; 1949 Reorg. Plan No. 7, §1, eff. Aug. 19, 1949, 14 F.R. 5288, 63 Stat. 1070; Pub. L. 97-322, title I, §107(a), Oct. 15, 1982, 96 Stat. 1582; Pub. L. 97-449, §2(d)(1), (3), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2440; Pub. L. 98-557, §17(g)(2), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2869.)

AMENDMENTS

1984—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 98-557 struck out “the Chief of Engineers and” before “the Secretary of Transportation” and substituted “the Secretary” for “they” wherever appearing.

1983—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 97-449, §2(d)(1), substituted “Secretary of Transportation” for “Secretary of War”. See Transfer of Functions note below.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 97-449, §2(d)(3), substituted “Secretary of Transportation” for “Public Roads Administration” wherever appearing. See Transfer of Functions note below.

1982—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 97-322 inserted exemption provision at end.

SHORT TITLE

Section 501 of title V of act Aug. 2, 1946, provided that: “This title [enacting this subchapter] may be cited as the ‘General Bridge Act of 1946.’”

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Functions, powers, and duties of Secretary of the Army [formerly War] and other offices and officers of Department of the Army [formerly War] under this section to extent that they relate generally to location and clearances of bridges and causeways in navigable waters of United States transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by section 6(g)(6)(C) of Pub. L. 89-670. Pub. L. 97-449 amended this section to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(C) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(C).

Functions of Public Roads Administration transferred to Bureau of Public Roads within General Services Administration by section 103(a) of act June 30, 1949. See Historical and Revision Notes under section 303(b) of Title 40, Public Buildings, Property, and Works. Section 303(b) of Title 40 was amended generally by Pub. L. 109-313, §2(a)(1), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1734, and, as so amended, no longer relates to the Federal Works Agency and Commissioner of Public Buildings. See 2006 Amendment note under section 303 of Title 40.

Bureau of Public Roads within General Services Administration transferred to Department of Commerce by section 1 of Reorg. Plan No. 7 of 1949.

For transfer of functions of other officers, employees, and agencies of Department of Commerce, with certain exceptions, to Secretary of Commerce, with power to delegate, see Reorg. Plan No. 5 of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. May 24, 1950, 15 F.R. 3174, 64 Stat. 1263, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

Functions, powers, and duties of Secretary of Commerce and other offices and officers of Department of Commerce under subsec. (c) of this section relating generally to highways transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by section 6(g)(6)(C) of Pub. L. 89-670. Pub. L. 97-449 amended this section to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(C) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(C).

RESERVATION OF RIGHT TO ALTER, AMEND, OR REPEAL

Section 511 of title V of act Aug. 2, 1946, provided that: “The right to alter, amend, or repeal this title [this subchapter] is hereby expressly reserved as to any and all bridges which may be built under authority hereof.”

**§ 526. Repealed. Pub. L. 100-17, title I, §135(e), Apr. 2, 1987, 101 Stat. 174**

Section, acts Aug. 2, 1946, ch. 753, title V, §503, 60 Stat. 847; Jan. 12, 1983, Pub. L. 97-449, §2(d)(1), 96 Stat. 2440, provided that tolls charged for transit over any interstate bridge be just and reasonable and authorized Secretary of Transportation to prescribe reasonable rates of toll for such transit, which rates were to be legal rates demanded and received. See section 508 of this title.

**§ 526a. Repealed. Pub. L. 100-17, title I, §135(f), Apr. 2, 1987, 101 Stat. 174**

Section, act Pub. L. 93-87, title I, §133(b), Aug. 13, 1973, 87 Stat. 267, authorized Secretary of Transportation to promulgate regulations establishing guidelines governing any increase in tolls for use of any bridge constructed pursuant to either the General Bridge Act of 1906 or the General Bridge Act of 1946.

STUDY OF TOLL BRIDGE AUTHORITY; INVESTIGATION AND STUDY OF FEDERAL STATUTES AND REGULATIONS; REPORT TO CONGRESS

Section 133(a) of Pub. L. 93-87 directed Secretary of Transportation to study the existing Federal laws and