

maintain a bridge across or over any of the navigable waters of the United States, such bridge shall not be built or commenced until the plans and specifications for its construction, together with such drawings of the proposed construction and such map of the proposed location as may be required for a full understanding of the subject, have been submitted to the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating for the Secretary's approval, nor until the Secretary shall have approved such plans and specifications and the location of such bridge and accessory works; and when the plans for any bridge to be constructed under the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title, have been approved by the Secretary it shall not be lawful to deviate from such plans, either before or after completion of the structure, unless the modification of such plans has previously been submitted to and received the approval of the Secretary. This section 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.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, §1, 34 Stat. 84; Pub. L. 97-322, title I, §107(c), Oct. 15, 1982, 96 Stat. 1582; Pub. L. 97-449, §2(d)(1), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2440; Pub. L. 98-557, §17(g)(1), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2869; Pub. L. 114-120, title III, §306(b)(2)(A), Feb. 8, 2016, 130 Stat. 55.)

AMENDMENTS

2016—Pub. L. 114-120 substituted "Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating" for "Secretary of Transportation".

1984—Pub. L. 98-557 substituted "for the Secretary's approval, nor until the Secretary" for "and Chief of Engineers for their approval, nor until they" and struck out "by the Chief of Engineers and" after "have been approved", "of the Chief of Engineers and" after "received the approval", and "of Transportation" after "by the Secretary" and after "of the Secretary".

1983—Pub. L. 97-449 substituted "Secretary of Transportation" for "Secretary of War" wherever appearing. See Transfer of Functions note below.

1982—Pub. L. 97-322 inserted sentence at end relating to exemption.

SHORT TITLE

Sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title are popularly known as the "Bridge Act of 1906" and the "General Bridge Act of 1906".

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 Pub. L. 89-670, §6(g)(6)(B), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 941. Pub. L. 97-449 amended this section to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(B) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(B).

§ 492. Bridge as post route; limitation as to charges against Government; telegraph and telephone lines

Any bridge built in accordance with the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this

title, shall be a lawful structure and shall be recognized and known as a post route, upon which no higher charge shall be made for the transmission over the same of the mails, the troops, and the munitions of war of the United States than the rate per mile paid for the transportation over any railroad, street railway, or public highway leading to said bridge; and the United States shall have the right to construct, maintain, and repair, without any charge therefor, telegraph and telephone lines across and upon said bridge and its approaches; and equal privileges in the use of said bridge and its approaches shall be granted to all telegraph and telephone companies.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, §2, 34 Stat. 85.)

§ 493. Use of railroad bridges by other railroad companies

All railroad companies desiring the use of any railroad bridge built in accordance with the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title, shall be entitled to equal rights and privileges relative to the passage of railway trains or cars over the same and over the approaches thereto upon payment of a reasonable compensation for such use; and in case of any disagreement between the parties in regard to the terms of such use or the sums to be paid all matters at issue shall be determined by the Secretary of Transportation upon hearing the allegations and proofs submitted to him.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, §3, 34 Stat. 85; Pub. L. 97-449, §2(d)(1), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2440.)

AMENDMENTS

1983—Pub. L. 97-449 substituted "Secretary of Transportation" for "Secretary of War". See Transfer of Functions note below.

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 Pub. L. 89-670, §6(g)(6)(B), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 941. Pub. L. 97-449 amended this section to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(B) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(B).

§ 494. Obstruction of navigation; alterations and removals; lights and signals; draws

No bridge erected or maintained under the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title, shall at any time unreasonably obstruct the free navigation of the waters over which it is constructed, and if any bridge erected in accordance with the provisions of said sections, shall, in the opinion of the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating at any time unreasonably obstruct such navigation, either on account of insufficient height, width of span, or otherwise, or if there be difficulty in passing the draw opening or the drawspan of such bridge by rafts, steamboats, or other water craft, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating after giving the parties inter-

ested reasonable opportunity to be heard, to notify the persons owning or controlling such bridge to so alter the same as to render navigation through or under it reasonably free, easy, and unobstructed, stating in such notice the changes required to be made, and prescribing in each case a reasonable time in which to make such changes, and if at the end of the time so specified the changes so required have not been made, the persons owning or controlling such bridge shall be deemed guilty of a violation of said sections; and all such alterations shall be made and all such obstructions shall be removed at the expense of the persons owning or operating said bridge. The persons owning or operating any such bridge shall maintain, at their own expense, such lights and other signals thereon as the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall prescribe. If the bridge shall be constructed with a draw, then the draw shall be opened promptly by the persons owning or operating such bridge upon reasonable signal for the passage of boats and other water craft.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, §4, 34 Stat. 85; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, §1, 37 Stat. 736; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, §§101–104, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7875, 60 Stat. 1097; Pub. L. 97–449, §2(d)(1), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2440; Pub. L. 100–17, title I, §135(a), Apr. 2, 1987, 101 Stat. 173; Pub. L. 109–241, title IX, §902(k), July 11, 2006, 120 Stat. 568; Pub. L. 111–281, title IX, §903(a)(9), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3010; Pub. L. 114–120, title III, §306(b)(2)(B), Feb. 8, 2016, 130 Stat. 55.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Act July 5, 1884, ch. 229, §8, 23 Stat. 148, relating to authority of Secretary of War to require owners of bridges which obstruct navigation to relieve the situation or be penalized, was probably omitted from the Code as superseded by this section and section 495 of this title, which by section 498b of this title were made applicable to bridges authorized prior to March 23, 1906.

Section would seem to supersede a provision of act Aug. 7, 1882, ch. 433, §1, 22 Stat. 309, which read as follows: “That all parties owning, occupying, or operating bridges over any navigable river shall maintain at their own expense, from sunset to sunrise, throughout the year, such lights on their bridges as may be required by the Light-House Board for the security of navigation: and in addition thereto all persons owning, occupying, or operating any bridge over any navigable river shall, in any event, maintain all lights on their bridge that may be necessary for the security of navigation.”

AMENDMENTS

2016—Pub. L. 114–120 substituted “Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating” for “Secretary of Homeland Security” in two places.

2010—Pub. L. 111–281 amended directory language of Pub. L. 109–241, §902(k). See 2006 Amendment note below.

2006—Pub. L. 109–241, §902(k), as amended by Pub. L. 111–281, substituted “Secretary of Homeland Security” for “Secretary of Transportation” in two places.

1987—Pub. L. 100–17 struck out last sentence relating to tolls.

1983—Pub. L. 97–449 substituted “Secretary of Transportation” for “Secretary of War” wherever appearing. See Transfer of Functions note below.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 111–281, title IX, §903(a), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3010, provided that the amendment by section 903(a)(9) is effective with enactment of Pub. L. 109–241.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

Functions, powers, and duties of Secretary of the Army [formerly War] and other offices and officers of Department of the Army [formerly War] relating to reasonableness of tolls and to location and clearances of bridges and causeways in navigable waters of United States under this section transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by section 6(g)(4)(A), (6)(B) of Pub. L. 89–670. Pub. L. 97–449 amended this section to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(4)(A), (6)(B) of Pub. L. 89–670, and repealed section 6(g)(4)(A), (6)(B).

Coast Guard transferred to Department of Transportation, and functions, powers, and duties relating to Coast Guard of Secretary of the Treasury and of other officers and offices of Department of the Treasury transferred to Secretary of Transportation by Pub. L. 89–670, §6(b)(1), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 938. Section 6(b)(2) of Pub. L. 89–670, however, provided that notwithstanding such transfer of functions, Coast Guard shall operate as part of Navy in time of war or when the President directs as provided in section 3 of Title 14, Coast Guard. See section 108 of Title 49, Transportation.

For transfer of functions of other officers, employees, and agencies of Department of the Treasury, with certain exceptions, to Secretary of the Treasury with power to delegate, see Reorg. Plan No. 26 of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. July 31, 1950, 15 F.R. 4935, 64 Stat. 1280, 1281, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. Functions of Coast Guard, and Commandant of Coast Guard, excepted from transfer when Coast Guard is operating as part of Navy under sections 1 and 3 of Title 14, Coast Guard.

“Commandant of the Coast Guard” substituted in text for “Secretary of Commerce” on authority of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, §§101 to 104, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

Secretary of Commerce and Labor redesignated Secretary of Labor by act Mar. 4, 1913, which enacted Department of Labor.

CONNECTICUT RIVER BRIDGES

Acts Aug. 7, 1939, ch. 503, 53 Stat. 1234, and Apr. 24, 1946, ch. 214, 60 Stat. 122, were amended by act Aug. 9, 1955, ch. 631, 69 Stat. 552, to provide that the last sentence of this section should not be applicable to bridges constructed pursuant to acts Aug. 7, 1939 and Apr. 24, 1946.

§ 494a. Study of bridges over navigable waters

The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a comprehensive study on the construction or alteration of any bridge, drawbridge, or causeway over the navigable waters of the United States with a channel depth of 25 feet or greater that may impede or obstruct future navigation to or from port facilities and for which a permit under the Act of March 23, 1906 (33 U.S.C. 491 et seq.), popularly known as the Bridge Act of 1906, was requested during the period beginning on January 1, 2006, and ending on August 3, 2011.

(Pub. L. 111–281, title IX, §905, Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3012; Pub. L. 112–213, title VII, §702(a), Dec. 20, 2012, 126 Stat. 1580.)