

and the Government of the Republic of Panama with respect to ways to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts resulting from actions taken pursuant to such Treaty.

**(b) Appointment; compensation and travel expenses**

Representatives of the United States on the Joint Commission shall be appointed by the President and shall serve at the pleasure of the President. Such representatives shall serve without compensation but shall be allowed travel or transportation expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with section 3617 of this title.

**(c) Protection of pay, seniority, or other rights or benefits of appointed or detailed Federal employees**

Any Federal employee subject to the civil service laws and regulations who is detailed to serve with, or appointed by, the United States representatives on the Joint Commission shall not lose any pay, seniority, or other rights or benefits by reason of such detail or appointment.

**(d) Compensation of necessary personnel**

The United States representatives on the Joint Commission may, to such extent or in such amounts as are provided in advance in appropriation Acts, appoint and fix the compensation of such personnel as the representatives of the United States on the Joint Commission may consider necessary for the participation of the United States on the Joint Commission.

**(e) Rules of procedure; establishment; approval**

The United States representatives on the Joint Commission may, in cooperation with the representatives of the Republic of Panama on the Joint Commission, establish rules of procedure to be used by the Joint Commission in conducting its affairs, subject to the approval of such rules by the Governments of the United States and the Republic of Panama.

(Pub. L. 96-70, title I, §1106, Sept. 27, 1979, 93 Stat. 457.)

**§ 3617. Travel expenses**

While away from their homes, regular places of business, or official stations in performance of services under this part, members of the Board of the Commission and the representatives of the United States on the Consultative Committee referred to in section 3615 of this title and on the Joint Commission on the Environment referred to in section 3616 of this title shall be allowed travel or transportation expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5.

(Pub. L. 96-70, title I, §1107, Sept. 27, 1979, 93 Stat. 458.)

**§ 3618. Defense of Panama Canal**

In the event of an armed attack against the Panama Canal, or when, in the opinion of the President, conditions exist which threaten the security of the Canal, the Administrator of the

Commission shall, upon the order of the President, comply with such directives as the United States military officer charged with the protection and defense of the Panama Canal may consider necessary in the exercise of his duties.

(Pub. L. 96-70, title I, §1108, Sept. 27, 1979, 93 Stat. 458.)

**§ 3619. Joint sea level canal study**

**(a) Committee; appointment of representatives**

The President shall appoint the representatives of the United States to any joint committee or body with the Republic of Panama to study the possibility of a sea level canal in the Republic of Panama pursuant to Article XII of the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977.

**(b) Transmittal of study to President of Senate and Speaker of House of Representatives**

Upon the completion of any joint study between the United States and the Republic of Panama concerning the feasibility of a sea level canal in the Republic of Panama pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article XII of the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977, the text of the study shall be transmitted by the President to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

**(c) Congressional authorization respecting construction of sea level canal**

No construction of a sea level canal by the United States in the Republic of Panama shall be undertaken except with express congressional authorization after submission of the study by the President as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

(Pub. L. 96-70, title I, §1109, Sept. 27, 1979, 93 Stat. 459.)

**§ 3620. Authority of Ambassador; independence of Commission regarding its Panama Canal responsibilities**

**(a) Authority of Ambassador**

The United States Ambassador to the Republic of Panama shall have full responsibility for the coordination of the transfer to the Republic of Panama of those functions that are to be assumed by the Republic of Panama pursuant to the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 and related agreements.

**(b) Independence of Commission regarding its Panama Canal responsibilities**

(1) The Commission shall not be subject to the direction or supervision of the United States Chief of Mission in the Republic of Panama with respect to the responsibilities of the Commission for the operation, management, or maintenance of the Panama Canal, as established in this chapter or any other Act or in the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 and related agreements, except that the Commission shall keep the Ambassador fully and currently informed with respect to all activities and operations of the Commission.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (1) of this subsection, section 3927 of this title shall apply with respect to the activities of the Commission.