

Public Law 100-470  
100th Congress

An Act

To amend the National Trails System Act to provide for cooperation with State and local governments for the improved management of certain Federal lands, and for other purposes.

Oct. 4, 1988

[S. 1544]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

National Trails System Improvements Act of 1988. Conservation. Public lands. Recreation. 16 USC 1241 note. 16 USC 1248 note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Trails System Improvements Act of 1988".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress hereby finds that—

(1) State and local governments have a special role to play under the National Trails System Act in acquiring and developing trails for recreation and conservation purposes.

(2) Many miles of public land rights-of-way have been granted to the railroads by the United States, and much of this mileage could be suitable for trail use at such time as it may be abandoned.

(3) The United States should retain any residual interest it may have in such public land rights-of-way and relinquish it, where appropriate, in favor of State and local governments or other nonprofit entities for trail purposes.

SEC. 3. NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT AMENDMENTS.

Section 9 of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1248) is amended by adding the following new subsections after subsection (b):

"(c) Commencing upon the date of enactment of this subsection, any and all right, title, interest, and estate of the United States in all rights-of-way of the type described in the Act of March 8, 1922 (43 U.S.C. 912), shall remain in the United States upon the abandonment or forfeiture of such rights-of-way, or portions thereof, except to the extent that any such right-of-way, or portion thereof, is embraced within a public highway no later than one year after a determination of abandonment or forfeiture, as provided under such Act.

Highways.

"(d)(1) All rights-of-way, or portions thereof, retained by the United States pursuant to subsection (c) which are located within the boundaries of a conservation system unit or a National Forest shall be added to and incorporated within such unit or National Forest and managed in accordance with applicable provisions of law, including this Act.

National Forest System.

"(2) All such retained rights-of-way, or portions thereof, which are located outside the boundaries of a conservation system unit or a National Forest but adjacent to or contiguous with any portion of the public lands shall be managed pursuant to the Federal Land

Policy and Management Act of 1976 and other applicable law, including this section.

“(3) All such retained rights-of-way, or portions thereof, which are located outside the boundaries of a conservation system unit or National Forest which the Secretary of the Interior determines suitable for use as a public recreational trail or other recreational purposes shall be managed by the Secretary for such uses, as well as for such other uses as the Secretary determines to be appropriate pursuant to applicable laws, as long as such uses do not preclude trail use.

National Forest  
System.

“(e)(1) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized where appropriate to release and quitclaim to a unit of government or to another entity meeting the requirements of this subsection any and all right, title, and interest in the surface estate of any portion of any right-of-way to the extent any such right, title, and interest was retained by the United States pursuant to subsection (c), if such portion is not located within the boundaries of any conservation system unit or National Forest. Such release and quitclaim shall be made only in response to an application therefor by a unit of State or local government or another entity which the Secretary of the Interior determines to be legally and financially qualified to manage the relevant portion for public recreational purposes. Upon receipt of such an application, the Secretary shall publish a notice concerning such application in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the relevant portion is located. Such release and quitclaim shall be on the following conditions:

Public  
information.

“(A) If such unit or entity attempts to sell, convey, or otherwise transfer such right, title, or interest or attempts to permit the use of any part of such portion for any purpose incompatible with its use for public recreation, then any and all right, title, and interest released and quitclaimed by the Secretary pursuant to this subsection shall revert to the United States.

“(B) Such unit or entity shall assume full responsibility and hold the United States harmless for any legal liability which might arise with respect to the transfer, possession, use, release, or quitclaim of such right-of-way.

“(C) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States shall be under no duty to inspect such portion prior to such release and quitclaim, and shall incur no legal liability with respect to any hazard or any unsafe condition existing on such portion at the time of such release and quitclaim.

“(2) The Secretary is authorized to sell any portion of a right-of-way retained by the United States pursuant to subsection (c) located outside the boundaries of a conservation system unit or National Forest if any such portion is—

“(A) not adjacent to or contiguous with any portion of the public lands; or

“(B) determined by the Secretary, pursuant to the disposal criteria established by section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to be suitable for sale.

Prior to conducting any such sale, the Secretary shall take appropriate steps to afford a unit of State or local government or any other entity an opportunity to seek to obtain such portion pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection.

“(3) All proceeds from sales of such retained rights of way shall be deposited into the Treasury of the United States and credited to the

Land and Water Conservation Fund as provided in section 2 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965.

“(4) The Secretary of the Interior shall annually report to the Congress the total proceeds from sales under paragraph (2) during the preceding fiscal year. Such report shall be included in the President’s annual budget submitted to the Congress.

Reports.

“(f) As used in this section—

“(1) The term ‘conservation system unit’ has the same meaning given such term in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (Public Law 96-487; 94 Stat. 2371 et seq.), except that such term shall also include units outside Alaska.

“(2) The term ‘public lands’ has the same meaning given such term in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.”

#### SEC. 4. IDITAROD HISTORIC TRAIL ADVISORY COUNCIL.

Section 5 of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241), as amended, is further amended as follows: In subsection 5(d) after the phrase “each of which councils shall expire ten years from the date of its establishment.” insert “establishment, except that the Advisory Council established for the Iditarod Historic Trail shall expire twenty years from the date of its establishment.”

Termination  
date.  
16 USC 1244.

#### SEC. 5. CONDEMNATION.

(a) Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to use condemnation proceedings to retain or acquire all or any portion of a right-of-way described in this Act.

(b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to expand or diminish existing condemnation authorities contained in the National Trails System Act, as amended.

12 USC 1248  
note.

Approved October 4, 1988.

#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1544 (H.R. 2641):

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 100-572 accompanying H.R. 2641 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 100-408 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 134 (1988):

Apr. 19, H.R. 2641 considered and passed House.

July 6, S. 1544 considered and passed Senate.

Aug. 2, considered and passed House, amended.

Sept. 19, Senate concurred in House amendments.