

TITLE 33 - NAVIGATION AND NAVIGABLE WATERS
CHAPTER 9 - PROTECTION OF NAVIGABLE WATERS AND OF HARBOR AND RIVER IMPROVEMENTS GENERALLY
SUBCHAPTER I - IN GENERAL

§ 403. Obstruction of navigable waters generally; wharves; piers, etc.; excavations and filling in

The creation of any obstruction not affirmatively authorized by Congress, to the navigable capacity of any of the waters of the United States is prohibited; and it shall not be lawful to build or commence the building of any wharf, pier, dolphin, boom, weir, breakwater, bulkhead, jetty, or other structures in any port, roadstead, haven, harbor, canal, navigable river, or other water of the United States, outside established harbor lines, or where no harbor lines have been established, except on plans recommended by the Chief of Engineers and authorized by the Secretary of the Army; and it shall not be lawful to excavate or fill, or in any manner to alter or modify the course, location, condition, or capacity of, any port, roadstead, haven, harbor, canal, lake, harbor or refuge, or inclosure within the limits of any breakwater, or of the channel of any navigable water of the United States, unless the work has been recommended by the Chief of Engineers and authorized by the Secretary of the Army prior to beginning the same.

(Mar. 3, 1899, ch. 425, § 10, 30 Stat. 1151; July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, § 205(a), 61 Stat. 501.)

Codification

Section is from act Mar. 3, 1899, popularly known as the “Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899”.

Prior Provisions

This section and section 9 of act Mar. 3, 1899 (section 401 of this title), superseded provisions of act Sept. 19, 1890, ch. 907, § 7, 26 Stat. 454, as amended by act July 13, 1892, ch. 158, § 3, 27 Stat. 110, which prohibited the erection of obstructions to navigation, and prohibited the erection of bridges over navigable waters under State legislation before the approval of the plans by the Secretary of War, and prohibited the alteration of channels unless authorized by said Secretary.

Change of Name

Department of War designated Department of the Army and title of Secretary of War changed to Secretary of the Army by section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, 61 Stat. 501. Section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, was repealed by section 53 of act Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 641. Section 1 of act Aug. 10, 1956, enacted “Title 10, Armed Forces” which in sections 3010 to 3013 continued Department of the Army under administrative supervision of Secretary of the Army.

Transfer of Functions

Enforcement functions of Secretary of the Army, Chief of Engineers, or other official in Corps of Engineers of the United States Army related to compliance with permits for structures in navigable waters issued under this section with respect to pre-construction, construction, and initial operation of transportation system for Canadian and Alaskan natural gas were transferred to the Federal Inspector, Office of Federal Inspector for the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, until the first anniversary of date of initial operation of the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, see Reorg. Plan No. 1 of 1979, §§ 102(b), 203 (a), 44 F.R. 33663, 33666, 93 Stat. 1373, 1376, effective July 1, 1979, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. Office of Federal Inspector for the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System abolished and functions and authority vested in Inspector transferred to Secretary of Energy by section 3012(b) of Pub. L. 102–486, set out as an Abolition of Office of Federal Inspector note under section 719e of Title 15, Commerce and Trade. Functions and authority vested in Secretary of Energy subsequently transferred to Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects by section 720d (f) of Title 15.

Functions, powers, and duties of Secretary of the Army and other offices and officers of Department of the Army under section 401 of this title to extent that they relate generally to location and clearances of bridges and causeways

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscpri.html>).

in navigable waters of United States transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by Pub. L. 89-670 § 6(g)(6)(A), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 941. Pub. L. 97-449 amended section 401 of this title to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(A) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6 (g)(6)(A).