

## Prezi Presentation: 1961 Cross-Florida Barge Canal

Transcript:

### 1961 Cross- Florida Barge Canal

Choose the proposed legislation YOU would like to learn about and debate!

1961: The Cross Florida Barge Canal: You get to decide if Florida should build a man-made waterway across the state. It will connect the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. This canal would allow barges to move goods and people more quickly and safely.

History of the Cross-Florida Canal: The idea of building a canal across Florida is very old. It is good to know its history before you hear the proposed legislation! So here is a little background information...

1. 1500s: Spanish explorers searched and searched for a river that crossed Florida.
  - a. This was because all around South Florida were dangerous coral reefs that caused many shipwrecks! But, the explorers never found a route across the state...
2. 1800s: The Erie Canal was built in New York in 1825. Many new businesses sprung up along the canal's route. Seeing this, Florida legislators asked the U.S. Congress for money to build a canal across Florida.
  - a. More Information: The Erie Canal did wonders for New York. It connected New York City to the Great Lakes, making New York City the #1 port in the country in 1850. Using barges on the canal reduced shipping-times by a factor of 3 and shipping costs for heavy materials by a factor of 20!
  - b. As you can see in the painting above, horses pulled the barges upstream in the Erie Canal's early years. Later, barges used diesel engines to travel through the canal.
  - c. Image from <http://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch2en/conc2en/eriecanal.html>
3. Mid-1930s:
  - a. Definition: The Great Depression was a worldwide low point in economic activity. It began in 1929 and lasted about 10 years. Many people lost their jobs, homes, and life-savings.
  - b. The idea for a canal was brought up again during the Great Depression. It was seen by many as a good way to provide jobs to Floridians. The plan was to build a 30-foot deep, 250-foot wide ship canal across the state. Some residents worried that a deep canal would allow saltwater to mix with the underground freshwater. This would ruin the water needed for drinking and watering crops. But, the project ran out of money with only 3% of it finished.

- c. This picture is the work done during that time, so you can see what a canal might look like!
- 4. Early 1940s: During World War II, German submarines sink many U.S. ships near the Florida Coast. Ships transporting oil were a favorite target of the Germans because the U.S. used that oil to power its vehicles, boats, and airplanes needed to fight the war!
- 5. Definition: To appropriate is to assign or set aside money. This is the term usually used by congress or a legislature. It describes the amount of money given to a particular department, program, or project.
  - a. The U.S. Congress wanted to give American ships more protection during the war. So, they approved the construction of a canal across the state in 1942. Critics of this plan argued that because of the war, there was not enough money, building materials, and men needed to build the canal. Probably for these reasons, Congress never appropriated enough money to support the project...
  - b. Bonus!
    - i. This cartoon ran in the Miami Herald on July 6, 1942. The newspaper sent a copy of the cartoon to every member of Congress.
      - 1. FYI: Claude Pepper (who's flying the plane) was a U.S. Senator from Florida who supported the canal.
    - ii. Questions
      - 1. Was the Miami Herald for or against the canal?
      - 2. Why would the Miami Herald send the cartoon to the U.S. Congressmen?
- 6. Now, in 1961...
- 7. Definition: The Cold War (1945-1991) consisted of political and military tensions between western countries and communist countries. The West was led by the United States, while the Communists were led by the Soviet Union
  - a. ...the Cold War is in full swing. American shippers are worried about their safety as the pass by Florida because Cuba (an ally of the Soviet Union) is located only 90 miles away.
  - b. The new proposal uses the same 1930s route. But instead of being 30 ft. deep, this one will only be 12ft. due to past worries of saltwater mixing with the valuable fresh water.
  - c. For several hundred years, people have hoped for a quicker, safer route between the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean.
  - d. Should this route finally become a reality?
- 8. This centuries-old idea is simple: The canal can bring new business opportunities to Florida since it can help ship items more quickly, safely, and cheaply.
  - a. This video explains...



- i. Bridges, parks, roads, dams, sidewalks, railroads, schools, hospitals, beaches, power plants, airports, and the power lines are all public works projects.
  - ii. National, state and local governments all provide different public works for its citizens.
  - iii. Public works projects cost a lot of money and often affect the environment. The government's goal is to pick good projects. If they are good, they will provide more benefits to the citizens in the long run than the project will cost them at the beginning. Elected officials must also decide if the benefits to the public will outweigh the cost and the risk to the environment.
14. As a state legislator, your job will be to listen to all the arguments and then decide if the project is in the best long-term interest of the State of Florida.
  - a. If you decide it's a good idea, then the U.S. Congress will decide if it's in the best interest of the rest of the country, since the federal government will be providing the money to pay for it!
15. Remember! A bill has to make its way through legislative committees that look at the bill from different perspectives.
  - a. For instance, committees for the barge canal might study:
    - i. How the canal might help businesses in the state
    - ii. How the canal could make the state's transportation better
    - iii. How the canal would have an impact on the local environment and farming
    - iv. How the canal would be used by the military
16. What happens at a committee meeting?
  - a. Committee members call experts and public officials to speak about the merits of a bill. Citizens can also share their opinions with their elected representatives and speak at these meetings!
17. Next you will hear questions that might be proposed in the different legislative committees. Representative Pro will answer these questions by giving the main arguments for supporting this memorial. Representative Con will answer the questions by giving the main arguments against it.
  - a. Then, an Expert Witness will also give his or her input on the proposal!
18. Pay close attention to their arguments. Then think about your own opinion now that you are well-informed about the proposed bill, too!
19. Military Affairs Committee
  - a. Question 1: Would the canal help our military, especially if the country had to go to war?
  - b. Rep. Pro:

- i. During World War II, many U.S. ships were sunk by enemy submarines. We have the communist country of Cuba threatening our shores. This canal will provide a safe route for the military to move troops and supplies between the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean during any war. Look at the map to see the benefits!
  - 1. Notice how close Cuba is to Florida. Does Rep. Pro have a good point?
- ii. Definition: Communism is a type of government. Under communism, all resources, like factories and farms, are not owned by private companies or people. Instead, they are owned by the public or the government. Money is divided among citizens equally.
  - 1. During the 1960s, the United States was fighting a “Cold War” against communist countries worldwide. These countries including Cuba, were led by the Soviet Union.

c. Rep. Con:

- i. Sure, the canal would give our military a safer route than the one near Cuba. Is that protection really worth the canal’s \$350 million price tag?

d. Expert Testimony: Congressman Overton Brooks

- i. “The new Russian menace makes a Florida canal a vital link in the national transportation system.”

e. After hearing about how helpful the canal could be for the U.S. military...

- i. What do you think?

20. Commerce & Trade Committee

a. Question 2: Would the canal improve trade and help businesses in Florida and the country?

- i. Definition: Commerce is the exchange of goods between different countries or different regions within the same country. For example, a lot of orange juice is made in Florida. Then it’s shipped and sold to grocery stores all over the United States. This is commerce.

ii. Rep. Con:

- 1. Of course, building anything cost money. But this canal will cost the federal government over \$350 million! That is a lot of money to spend when we already have railroads and highways in the state that serve the same purpose as this canal. In my opinion, the help to businesses will be very small and not worth the cost of building.

iii. Rep. Pro:

- 1. The canal will bring jobs and business to the state. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that the canal will pay for itself

and grow the economy by over \$17 million. Barges will help businesses sell large items across the country and the world. Check out this video for more information!

## 2. Video transcript

### iv. Expert Testimony

1. Florida Governor LeRoy Collins
2. President Kennedy
3. George Smathers, U.S. Senator from Florida
4. President John F. Kennedy: “I regard it not only as important to Florida but to the economy of the entire county, which must fully utilize all of our national resources if we are to achieve necessary economic expansion.”

- b. After hearing how the barge canal might affect trade and business in Florida...
  - i. What do you think?

### 21. Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee

- a. Question 3: How will the canal affect Florida’s natural resources and agriculture?

- i. Definition: Natural resources are items that come from the environment that humans use for their benefit. These include many things, from oil and minerals, to fresh water and air. They even include things like seafood.
- ii. Definition: Agriculture is the growing of plants and raising of animals for human use. It often refers to farming and livestock. But, it can also include lumber, shellfish, and even solar energy.
- iii. Rep. Pro:
  1. We have studied this canal for centuries. The canal will only be 12-feet deep to make sure saltwater does not mix with drinking water. It will also help control floods and store water in times of drought. This waterway will provide Florida’s farmers with a cheaper way to get their crops to markets. On top of all that, this canal will provide new waterways and lakes for fishing, boating, and camping. Let’s stop studying the canal. Let’s actually build it!

### iv. Rep. Con:

1. Many residents are still worried that the canal might ruin Florida’s freshwater supply. They are also worried that saltwater might get into rivers. This would hurt both fishing and wildlife. I would recommend looking more closely to the negative effect this canal might cause to our state’s natural wonders. Once built, the canal cannot be undone!

v. Expert Testimony

1. State Geologist Robert Vernon: “ The proposed barge canal construction of locks would maintain the groundwater level of the area adjacent to the canal...[It] has none of the inherent dangers present in the formerly proposed sea level ship canal...[and will help Florida’s] underground freshwater resources by serving as a conservation and flood-control measure.”

b. Now that you have heard how the canal might help or hurt agriculture and natural resources in the state...

i. What do you think?

22. Transportation & Traffic Committee

a. Question 4: Will the canal improve the state and the nation’s transportation system?

i. Rep Con:

1. A good economy comes from wise decisions. But, this canal will serve the same purpose as the public interstate highways and private railroads. Can you explain to me why our government should spend a lot of money on a canal that is not really needed?

ii. Rep Pro:

1. Being able to cheaply and safely move goods builds a strong economy. That is why the government builds roads and canals and manages air traffic. In the 1820s, the Erie Canal connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. It made New York City the number one port in the country. New York City is still the U.S.’s biggest city today! If we make a quicker, safer route between the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, think of what it can do for Florida!

iii. Expert Testimony

1. Florida Secretary of State Tom Adams: “Within four years of its completion, the Cross Florida Canal will carry as much tonnage as is now carried on the Suez Canal.”

a. More Information: The Suez Canal is a canal that connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. This canal lets ships travel between Europe and Asia without having to go around to Africa. In the 1960s, roughly 58 ships used the canal each day. In a year, ships carried about 274 million tons through the Suez Canal!

- b. Now that you have learned about how the canal could make the state and nation's transportation system better...
  - i. What do you think?
  - ii. You know the canal's history. You have heard the current proposal. And, you have also listened to some of the main arguments for and against this Cross-Florida Barge Canal...
  - iii. Now you'll have to decide if you believe this public works project is a wise choice for the state!
  - iv. Once the memorial makes it through all the committees it will go to the floor to be debated. Then, you'll have a chance to debate this bill on the floor of the state's historic House of Representatives! That's where you can tell everyone why you do or do not support the Cross-Florida Barge Canal memorial!

1999: Opportunity Scholarship Program: You get to decide if Florida should provide "Opportunity Scholarships" to students in failing public schools. These scholarships would provide funds for these students to get a better public school or private school. This program is one part of former Governor Jeb Bush's A+ Education Plan.

1982: The Equal Rights Amendment: You get to decide if Florida should ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA would guarantee men and women equal rights. Thirty-five states have already ratified the amendment. If Florida does too, it would set the stage for it to be added to the U.S. Constitution.