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State Inventory of the Water Transportation System
by
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In 1984, a comprehensive inventory of the inland waterway system that serves Kentucky was prepared for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The inventory was published in a report entitled Waterways Transportation in Kentucky, March 1984. Responsibility for the riverport program was transferred to the Kentucky Commerce Cabinet in December 1985.

Kentucky is served by eight different navigable rivers including the Ohio, Mississippi, Kentucky, Green, Cumberland, Tennessee, Licking and Big Sandy. For each of these rivers, the inventory identifies the number of river miles in Kentucky, number of locks and dams, number of cargo handling terminals, 1980 tonnage for the entire river (not just the portion in Kentucky), major commodities, approximate annual expenditures by the Corps of Engineers for maintaining the rivers within the borders of Kentucky, and if a federal navigation study is being conducted on any of the rivers within the state.

The inland waterways that serve Kentucky include 1,090 miles of navigable waterways and 18 locks and dams, of which 10 are on the Ohio River. Through the end of 1983, there were 186 river terminals that primarily handled coal, grain, aggregates, petroleum products, chemicals and steel. Coal accounted for 55 percent of the waterway shipments in the state, and nearly one-fourth of the state's coal production was shipped by barge.

Since 1966, nine autonomous port authorities have been created to promote waterborne commerce and water-oriented industrial development. Eight of the port authorities are located on the Ohio River.