

November XX, 2020

President-Elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Biden-Harris Transition
Washington, DC

Re: Halt Border Wall Construction on January 20th

Dear President-Elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.,

We write to ask you to take immediate action to order the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and Department of Justice to halt all construction and land acquisition efforts for Trump's border wall on your first day in office. Every day, border wall construction continues to desecrate Indigenous sacred sites, destroy federally protected wildlands, and rip border communities and family homes in two. There is great urgency in stopping border wall construction. Each day brings more irreparable damage.

The construction of Trump's wall has forever harmed Indigenous sacred sites, ancestral lands and burial grounds. Last month, members of the Tohono O'odham Nation were tear-gassed and shot with rubber bullets while peacefully protesting the desecration of their lands. Tohono O'odham Tribal Chairman Ned Norris Jr. called border wall construction "no different from DHS building a 30-foot wall along Arlington Cemetery," and demanded the Trump administration cease all construction activity immediately. A clear directive must be sent to all employees of the executive branch that these violent actions against Indigenous peoples and their homelands are immoral, and must cease without delay.

Hundreds of miles of Trump's wall have been built outside the scope of environmental law, inflicting permanent damage on wildlife refuges, national park lands, and wilderness areas. Wildlife corridors have been cut off, critical habitat for endangered species has been dynamited, and protected plant species have been bulldozed. Millions of gallons of precious desert groundwater have been recklessly sucked out of the ground for the wall's concrete foundation. Rare desert springs are drying up and endangered species are now on the brink of extinction.

The border wall is separating vibrant communities and wasting billions of taxpayer dollars — including billions in military funding illegally diverted for construction. Meanwhile, the Department of Justice is aggressively bringing eminent domain actions against countless families along the border, forcing them to fight legal battles to save their homes and land.

All of this can be stopped the day you take office — halt wall construction, cancel existing construction contracts, and stop all land acquisition and eminent domain proceedings. These simple, immediate actions will spare Indigenous sacred sites from destruction, save wildlife from extinction, protect our public lands, and help countless families stay in their homes.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity
GROUPS