

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-146 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2023

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the eighty undersigned organizations dedicated to environmental protection, civil and human rights, and community uplift, we write again to urge you to provide funding and guidance in the FY 2024 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill to remediate the immense harms that border wall construction and militarization have inflicted on communities and wildlife in the borderlands. Many of our groups have members who continue to witness first-hand the devastating impacts from construction of border wall and related infrastructure on border communities and the environment,

We very much appreciate that the initial FY 2023 House and Senate Homeland Security appropriations bills would have authorized the transfer of funds to the federal land management agencies to begin to address damage from wall construction, and we were extremely disappointed that this funding was not retained in the final FY2023 omnibus bill.

As we have previously written, the prior administration's insistence on unnecessary, wasteful, and harmful border wall construction wreaked destruction on the borderlands and the millions who call the border region home, including damaging lands sacred to the O'odham, Carrizo-Comecrudo, and Kumeyaay peoples; desecrating Native American burial sites; dynamiting pristine mountain wilderness; erecting walls in floodplains; separating imperiled wildlife populations; destroying fragile resources in national wildlife refuges, forests, monuments and other public lands; depleting ancient water sources in sensitive desert ecosystems; seizing ranches, farms, and backyards from families; risking lives by forcing migrants to cross into more

remote regions; and fomenting dangerous racial hatred against migrants and Indigenous peoples.

The Secretaries of Homeland Security under previous administrations have waived eighty-four cornerstone federal laws, along with countless unnamed state and local laws and regulations, created to protect the environment, wildlife, religious freedom, historic and cultural sites, and taxpayers' interest in responsible procurement. To date, those waivers of law have not yet been rescinded, thus continuing to deny equal protection under the law to the borderlands and the millions who call the border region home.

The Biden Administration has taken some initial steps to address the damage, but much more must be done. Congress must rescind any remaining funding for construction of the border wall and related infrastructure, refrain from providing any new wall funding and provide the resources necessary to restore and repair border communities and lands to mitigate the harms done.

To achieve these goals and address these concerns, we urge the House and Senate FY 2024 Homeland Security appropriations bills to take the following steps:

- Rescind any remaining and all previously appropriated funding for the construction of the border wall system, including for lights and enforcement zone development.
- Reject any proposals to provide additional funding for border wall and related infrastructure.
- Support, at a minimum, the president's FY 2024 budget request for statutory language authorizing the transfer of up to \$225 million in funding from DHS to the land management agencies for environmental and other mitigation activities, including land acquisition, related to border wall construction. We strongly support no less than this amount in the FY 2024 Homeland Security bill.
- Ensure that the multi-agency agency working group established previously by Congress to identify the impacts of border security infrastructure on border security, communities, tribes, wildlife, and local environments makes a robust effort to develop a comprehensive plan to remediate harms from border barriers in consultation with local governments, tribes, communities, scientists, environmental experts, and other stakeholders.

There must be continued efforts to address the massive and needless damage to the border region and its people as swiftly as possible. We strongly urge you to include these requests in the FY 2024 appropriations bills.

Sincerely,

Action for the Climate Emergency
Adorers of the Blood of Christ US Region JPIC office
Adrian Dominican Sisters
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Arizona Trail Association
Barbara Chillcott
Center for Biological Diversity
Chispa Arizona
Church World Service
Coalición de Derechos Humanos
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St Agnes
Cuenca Los Ojos
Defenders of Wildlife
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Dorothy Day House, Washington DC
Eagle Pass Border Coalition
Earthjustice
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center- EPIC
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of Friendship Park
Friends of the Sonoran Desert
Frontera de Cristo
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Hia Ced O'odham Alliance, Ajo, Arizona
Hispanic Access Foundation
Holy Cross Sisters
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Holy Union Sisters - United States Province
Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
Kentucky Heartwood

Laredo No Border Wall Coalition
League of Conservation Voters
Lower Brazos Riverwatch
Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center
Medical Mission Sisters
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Project
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
Nextgen America
Operation HomeCare, Inc.
Patagonia Area Resource Alliance
Presentation Sisters - USA Unit
Presentation Sisters, San Francisco, CA
Project Eleven Hundred
RESTORE: The North Woods
San Pedro 100
San Xavier District, Tohono O'odham Nation
Sierra Club
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill Philadelphia
Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, IN
Sisters of the Precious Blood
Sky Island Alliance
Southern Border Communities Coalition
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Wilderness Society
Tohono O'odham Nation
Tucson Audubon Society
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Voces Unidas RGV

Watershed Management Group
Wheaton Franciscan JPIC Office
Wild Arizona
Wildlands Network