

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

The Honorable Dave Joyce  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
2006 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

June 6, 2023

**RE: Opposition to FY 2024 House Homeland Security Appropriations Bill**

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the more than 60 undersigned organizations dedicated to environmental protection, civil and human rights, and community uplift, we write to express our opposition to the FY 2024 House Homeland Security appropriations bill and its funding and provisions related to additional border wall construction, as marked up in subcommittee on May 18, 2023. 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. The funding and requirements for additional wall and related infrastructure in the FY 2024 House Homeland Security appropriations bill are unacceptable and should not be included in any final FY 2024 funding package.

Specifically, we are opposed to:

- Section 211 which, among other things, provides \$2.1 billion for construction of additional border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border; requires the wall be steel bollard pedestrian barrier built at least 18 to 30 feet tall with anti-climb and anti-dig features; and requirements for the Secretary of Homeland Security to begin obligation of funds for additional wall construction no later than 120 days after enactment of the bill.
- Section 212 which prevents funds from being expended or transferred to another federal entity to remove or dismantle existing wall.

President Trump spent billions in taxpayer dollars to build hundreds of miles of unnecessary, wasteful, and harmful border wall. This 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.

Moreover, the construction was exempted from eighty-four cornerstone federal laws along with countless unnamed state and local laws and regulations under the waiver authority provided by the 2005 REAL ID Act. The laws that were bypassed were created to protect the environment, wildlife, religious freedom, historic and cultural sites, and taxpayers’ interest in responsible procurement. It is a fair assumption that additional wall that would be constructed under the funding and provisions of this bill would be similarly exempted from crucial legal requirements, again denying the borderlands and border communities equal protection under the law.

More wall would only waste more taxpayer dollars and inflict more harm on the people, communities, lands, and wildlife of the border region. And all of this destruction at great expense has not even been proved to be effective in its highly questionable goal – no Congressionally mandated report has ever documented the need for or the effectiveness of the wall; indeed, the Government Accountability Office has repeatedly noted these issues.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than continuing to follow this destructive, misguided, wasteful, and ineffective effort to wall off the entire U.S.-Mexico border, Congress should advance provisions and funding necessary to restore and repair border communities and lands to mitigate the harms that have been inflicted on the border region as swiftly as possible.

Again, we are deeply opposed to this flawed and dangerous piece of legislation, and we urge you to reconsider the damaging provisions in this bill. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., “Southwest Border Security: CBP Is Evaluating Designs and Locations for Border Barriers but is Proceeding Without Key Information, GAO-18-614 (July 2018).

Animal Welfare Institute  
Born Free USA  
CalWild  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Christian Council of Delmarva  
Coalición de Derechos Humanos  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Difference Makers Media  
Eagle Pass Border Coalition  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Habitats League  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Center of San Diego  
Environmental Protection Information Center  
Friends of the Sonoran Desert  
Friends of the Wildlife Corridor  
Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf and Wildlife  
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Heartwood  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Immigration Equality Action Fund  
Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America  
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio  
Kettle Range Conservation Group  
Laredo No Border Wall Coalition  
League of Conservation Voters  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Lower Brazos Riverwatch  
Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Mojave Monitor  
MomsRising/MamásConPoder  
Muslim Justice League  
National Butterfly Center  
National Education Association

National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wolfwatcher Coalition  
No Border Wall Coalition  
North American Butterfly Association  
Northern Jaguar Project  
NY4WHALES  
Ocean Conservation Research  
Oceanic Preservation Society  
Oil Change International  
Primate Conservation Inc  
Resource Renewal Institute  
San Xavier District, Tohono O'odham Nation  
Seven Circles Foundation  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
Sky Island Alliance  
Southern Border Communities Coalition  
The Urban Wildlands Group  
The Wilderness Society  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
Western Nebraska Resources Council  
Western Watersheds Project  
Wild Arizona  
Wilderness Watch  
Wildlands Network  
Wolf Conservation Center  
Zero Hour