

BORDER WALL FACT SHEET

O American taxpayers have spent approximately \$18.74 billion to construct over 700 miles of damaging, ineffective border wall.ⁱ Congress must not provide any further wall construction funding and end this waste of valuable resources on political theatrics and a deadly photo backdrop. A recent House Budget Committee draft outline for budget reconciliation proposes an additional \$35.8 billion for border wall for the House Homeland Security Committee. The Senate version of the budget resolution also proposes billions for border wall.

O The Congressional Research Service, the General Accountability Office, and the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General's Office have criticized the methodology used related to border wall, including failure to analyze alternative means of deterrence, lack of cost estimates for operation and maintenance of the wall (an early estimate was 15% annually of total costs) and lack of analysis regarding the effectiveness of the wall in meeting CBP's goals.ⁱⁱ

O The border wall has been ineffective against drug trafficking or irregular crossings, especially in remote areas of the borderlands.ⁱⁱⁱ Breaches in some areas occur multiple times a day, as demonstrated by time and date that welders note on the repaired bollards. There is also unprecedented increase in spinal and brain injuries and deaths from border wall falls.^{iv}

O In the 2005 REAL ID Act, Congress granted the Secretary of Homeland Security authority to waive all legal requirements that the Secretary, in his or her sole discretion, determined necessary to expedite border barrier and road construction.^v To date, 83 laws have been waived, including procurement and contracting laws, laws to protect religious freedom, environmental laws, laws protecting Native Americans, communities, wildlife, farmland, archaeological sites, coastal management, national park land and national wildlife refuges, wilderness, and air and water. The waivers have included all state, local and other legal requirements related to the same subject matter as the waived federal laws.

O Numerous federally recognized tribes live in the borderlands and wall construction has had devastating effects on tribal cultural sites and on tribal resources. Burial sites have been both blown up and dug up, water sources have been affected, sacred plants have been destroyed and lands have been badly eroded and religious practices have been disrupted.^{vi}

O The border wall harms wildlife in many ways: destroying habitat, blocking migration routes, potentially creating genetic bottlenecks, trapping and drowning animals during floods, and cutting off food and water sources.^{vii} The wall bisects some of the most sensitive habitat in the United States including many of our nation's most prized national wildlife refuges, forests, parks and wilderness areas and encompassing the ranges of more than 1,500 plants and animals including 83 species listed under the Endangered Species Act such as the critically imperiled Mexican wolf, jaguar, ocelot, bighorn sheep, and Sonoran pronghorn. A peer reviewed 2024 camera study along the Arizona border revealed an 86% reduction in wildlife crossings compared to places with vehicle barriers.^{viii} It has also severely degraded recreational activities on these highly valued public lands.

O In Texas, where the border is in the middle of the Rio Grande River, much of the adjacent land is on private land that must be obtained through eminent domain or sale. Nineteen communities in Texas, from El Paso to Brownsville, have passed resolutions against the border wall. If the Trump wall is built throughout Texas, land roughly equivalent to Rhode Island would be left between the river and the wall.

ⁱ Feb., 2017, *Southwest Border Security: Additional Actions Needed to Better Assess Fencing's Contributions to Operations and Provide Guidance for Identifying Capability Gaps*, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-17-331>; March 20, 2024, *DHS Border Barrier Funding Developments: FY 2021-2024*, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesecc/R47979.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ See e.g., July 14, 2020: *CBP Has Not Demonstrated Acquisition Capabilities Needed to Secure*, <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2020-07/OIG-20-52-Jul20.pdf>; February, 2017, *Southwest Border Security: Additional Actions Needed to Better Assess Fencing's Contributions to Operations and Provide Guidance for Identifying Capability Gaps*, Id. July, 2018, *Southwest Border Security: CBP Is Evaluating Designs and Locations for Border Barriers but Is Proceeding Without Key Information*, available here: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-18-614>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nick Miroff, "Trump's border wall has been breached more than 3,000 times by smugglers, CBP records show," *The Washington Post* (March 2, 2022), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/03/02/trump-border-wall-breached/>; David J. Bier, "Border Wall Was Breached 11 Times Per Day in 2022", *Cato Institute* (December 30, 2022), available at <https://www.cato.org/blog/border-wall-didnt-work>.

^{iv} Amy E. Liepert, MD; Allison E. Berndtson, MD; Linda L. Hill, MD, MPH^{1,2}; et al, *Association of 30-ft US-Mexico Border wall in San Diego with Increased Migrant Deaths, Trauma Center Admissions, and Injury Severity*, April 29, 2022, available at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamasurgery/fullarticle/2791900>; Whitcher, G.H., McLean, S.F. Injuries from border wall falls after 2018 are more severe: a retrospective cohort study. *Inj. Epidemiol.* **11**, 61 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-024-00544-y>

^v *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996*, Pub. L. No. 104-208, Stat. 3009, 3009-544 (codified as amended at 8 U.S.C. §1103 note), Section 102(c), as amended.

^{vi} GAO, *Southwest Border: Additional Actions Needed to Address Cultural and Natural Resource Impacts from Barrier Construction*, Sept. 2023; *Kumeyaay Nation protests border wall construction*, July 27, 2020, <https://goldengatexpress.org/93485/protests/kumeyaay-nation-protests-border-wall-construction/>

^{vii} See, e.g., *Nature Divided, Scientists United: US-Mexico Border Wall Threatens Biodiversity and Binational Conservation*, signed by more than 2,500 scientists, Oct. 2018, *Bioscience*, Vol. 68 No. 10, <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article-abstract/68/10/740/5057517?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

^{viii} *S. Mexico border wall impedes wildlife movement*, *Front. Ecol. Evol.*, 20 November 2024, available at <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/ecology-and-evolution/articles/10.3389/fevo.2024.1487911/full#hl>

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