

OPPOSING DAMAGING BORDER WALL FUNDING

Passed 239-192

SUMMARY:

The House passed a short-term funding bill to reopen the Department of Homeland Security, closed due to a government shutdown, without the additional funding for the expansion of a proposed wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The wall would damage sensitive lands and wildlife habitat. *(January 3, 2019, Roll Call No. 9)*

BACKGROUND:

Nearly one-third of the 1,953-mile U.S.-Mexico border lies within military, tribal, and public lands, including Wilderness areas, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, National Monuments, State Parks and hundreds of miles within the National Park System. Much of this country's most spectacular and imperiled wildlife, including Mexican wolves, jaguars, ocelot, bighorn sheep, Sonoran pronghorn, and hundreds of bird species, depend upon protected public lands along the border for intact habitat and survival. Since 2006, nearly 700 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border has been blocked by walls, fences and other barricades, impeding the movement of wildlife in search of food and mates, cutting off migration routes, and damaging public lands and other special places. These barriers also sever and harm human borderland communities. President Donald Trump has made an extension of the wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border a top priority for his administration. The wall's construction, maintenance and enforcement operations will have significant consequences for affected human communities, pristine wildlands, and wildlife, including potential impacts to at least 89 endangered or threatened species and 108 species of migratory birds. Border construction can be exempted from all federal, state or local laws under waiver authority provided by the 2005 REAL ID Act. Since President Trump took office, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has used this authority at least seventeen times, waiving more than forty laws, many of these repeatedly, including the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act and the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act.

During final negotiations on seven of the twelve regular FY 2019 appropriations in December 2018, Congress and President Trump reached an impasse over his demand for an additional \$5.7 billion for his border wall. As a result, the departments and agencies funded by those bills, including DHS, went unfunded in what became the longest government shutdown in U.S. government history, from December 22, 2018 to January 25, 2019. In an attempt to jump-start negotiations and reopen the affected government agencies, in early January 2019 the leadership of the House of Representatives brought H.J. Res. 1 to the floor to provide

temporary funding for DHS without the additional billions demanded by President Trump for his wall.

OUTCOME:

On January 3, 2019, the House passed H.J. Res.1, 239-192. "Yes" was the pro-conservation vote.