

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-146A The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations dedicated to environmental protection, civil and human rights, and community uplift, including groups that have witnessed first-hand the devastating impacts of border wall construction on border communities and the environment, we write to urge you to provide funding and guidance in the FY2022 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bills to begin to remediate the devastating harms that border wall construction and militarization have inflicted on communities and wildlife in the borderlands.

The prior administration's insistence on its unnecessary, wasteful, and harmful border wall 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.

To expedite this reckless wall construction, the previous Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security waived eighty-four cornerstone federal laws, along with countless unnamed state and other laws and regulations, created to protect the environment, wildlife,

religious freedom, historic and cultural sites and taxpayers' interest in responsible procurement.

We recognize that the Biden Administration has taken an important step in cancelling border wall projects using funds the previous administration had diverted from the Pentagon's budget. But simply halting the construction of the border wall that has caused so much harm, while important, is insufficient. Congress must provide the resources necessary to restore and repair border communities and lands to mitigate the harms done. We appreciate that during the FY2021 appropriations process, the House version of the DHS appropriations bill directed the transfer of up to \$75 million from DHS to the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for mitigation activities related to the construction of border wall and barriers.

While that funding was not retained in the final omnibus bill, the FY2022 appropriations process offers the opportunity for both House and Senate appropriations bills to initiate a robust, multi-agency process to identify the harmful consequences from border walls and other border barriers to the environment, wildlife, communities, and tribes, as well as to ensure sufficient funding to carry out the measures identified to rectify these harms, including decommissioning existing walls and other border barriers, as well as prevent future harm by restricting any funding for border wall construction and land condemnation proceedings. We also caution Congress that a "virtual" wall is not a humane or benign alternative to a physical wall and must be carefully restricted given that "smart" wall and invasive surveillance technologies can inflict harm on the environment and infringe on privacy rights of border communities.

The following should be included in the FY2022 DHS appropriations bill:

- No new funding for border wall or barriers – and rescission of any remaining and all previously appropriated funding for the construction of a border wall, border barriers, and related infrastructure;
- Statutory language transferring a sufficient amount of funding from the Department of Homeland Security, including unobligated border wall construction funding, to the Department of the Interior and other agencies with expertise in environmental conservation and mitigation as necessary to begin remediation and restoration efforts, prioritizing the removal of wall segments that cause or threaten to cause imminent harm to people, communities, wildlife and/or the land and restoration of habitat; and
- Statutory language/report language directing the administration to develop a long-term and comprehensive plan for wall removal, restoration of habitat, and other remediation as necessary in consultation with tribes, border communities, affected non-

governmental organizations, and federal, state and local natural resource and environment agencies along with a full estimate of costs.

The following should be included in the FY2022 Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill:

- Prohibit the use of funding by the Department of Justice for land condemnation proceedings for the planning or construction of border wall and related infrastructure.

The massive and needless damage to the border region and its people must be addressed as swiftly as possible. We strongly urge you to address these requests in the FY2022 appropriations bills.

Sincerely,

Alliance San Diego
Alliance4Action Immigration Action Group
American Civil Liberties Union
American Friends Service Committee
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Arizona Trail Association
ArtHeals
Azul
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Border Patrol Victims Network (FB)
Borderlands Restoration Network
CAIR-San Diego
Center for Biological Diversity
Chispa Arizona
Christian Council of Delmarva
Church World Service
Clean Water Action
Coalicion de Derechos Humanos
Community Asylum Seekers Project
Conservation Council For Hawaii
Defenders of Wildlife
Desert Support for Asylum Seekers
Eagle Pass Border Coalition
Earth Action, Inc.
Earthjustice
End Streamline Coalition

Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center
Fellowship Southwest
Franciscan Action Network
Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest
Friends of the Sonoran Desert
Frontera de Cristo
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Greenenvironment, LLC
Heartwood
Hispanic Access Foundation
Hispanic Federation
Howling For Wolves
Humane Borders
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Kino Border Initiative
Klamath Forest Alliance
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
League of Conservation Voters
Lean Power
Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
NM Comunidades en Accion y de Fe (CAFe)
NY4WHALES
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Mexico Wild
No Border Wall Coalition | Laredo, TX
Oceanic Preservation Society
Old-Growth Forest Network
Partnership for the National Trails
RESTORE: The North Woods
Rachel Carson Council
Rio Grande Valley No Border Wall Coalition

San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium
Save Animals Facing Extinction
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN)
Shagbark
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sky Island Alliance
Southern Border Communities Coalition
Southwest Environmental Center
The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona
The Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans
The Wilderness Society
Union for Reform Judaism
United We Dream
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
Upper Valley Affinity Group (Vermont)
Veterans United Against the Border Wall
Vets United to Stop the Wall
Voces Unidas
Wendell State Forest Alliance
Western Watersheds Project
White Mountain Conservation League
Wild Arizona
Wildearth Guardians
Wilderness Watch
Wildlands Network
Win Without War