

## **FUNDING DAMAGING BORDER WALL CONSTRUCTION**

Failed: 50-50

### **SUMMARY:**

The Senate rejected an amendment that sought to appropriate an additional \$500 million for border wall construction along the U.S.-Mexico border, that would harm border wildlife, borderlands and border communities. (*August 7, 2022, Roll Call No. 320*)

### **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 in the National Park System. Much of this country's most spectacular and imperiled wildlife, including Mexican wolves, jaguars, ocelot, Sonoran pronghorn, and hundreds of bird species, depend upon protected public lands along the border for intact habitat and survival.

President Trump spent billions of dollars to build hundreds of miles of wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, most with funds diverted from the Department of Defense (DOD). Prior to the Trump administration, nearly 700 miles of wall had been built along the border, primarily under President George W. Bush's administration. Construction of the border wall and related infrastructure can be exempted from all federal, state, or local laws under waiver authority provided to the Secretary of Homeland Security by the 2005 REAL ID Act. Secretaries of Homeland Security used this authority to waive 84 federal laws plus all related state and local laws for wall construction under both the Trump and Bush administrations, waiving many of these repeatedly for various sites, including the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act.

The damage that has been done and will be done to the people, communities, land and wildlife along the border is incalculable. The wall bisects some of the most sensitive and biodiverse 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. Walls block wildlife migration routes, trap and drown animals during floods, increase mortality of endangered and vulnerable species, and fragment habitat. More than 2,700 scientists from 43 countries declared the wall a disaster for biodiversity in a peer-reviewed article.

During consideration of H.R. 5376, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Senator Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) offered an amendment that sought to appropriate an additional \$500 million for construction of wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Similar to previous wall construction, this additional wall would be built under the current waivers of law.

**OUTCOME:**

On August 7, 2022, the Senate rejected the Sullivan amendment, 50-50. "No" was the pro-conservation vote.