



One Hundred Seventeenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

It is imperative that the Department continue the steady progress on our border wall system, including projects that have already been funded. Securing the sovereignty and integrity of our territorial borders should not be controversial and was not previously when President Biden rightfully voted in favor of the construction of hundreds of miles of fence along the southwest border during his tenure in the Senate.

The border wall system's combination of physical barriers, all-weather patrol and access roads, lighting, enforcement cameras, sensors, and other 21st century technology is supported by the men and women of the United States Border Patrol, operating on the front lines of securing the border. Border wall system meets their mission requirements for impedance and denial capability, as well as the identification and classification of border breaches. Rolling back any progress on border security infrastructure will only make our southwest border less secure.

We are increasingly concerned about the intent behind Presidential Proclamation 10142 to stop wall system construction projects funded by direct Congressional appropriations. These funds were included as part of negotiated bipartisan appropriations packages under Congress's Article I authority. The suspension of these projects is an alarming overreach by the Biden Administration.

Weakening border security, especially during a pandemic, will only result in another humanitarian and national security crisis at the southwest border, fueled by these policy decisions.

To fully assess the impact of Proclamation 10142 and the planned actions on the border wall system, we request responses to the following in writing by February 15, 2021:

1. A breakdown of the estimated costs of pausing wall system construction and obligation of funds for 60 days.
2. The estimated costs of terminating or repurposing existing wall system construction contracts.

3. The legal basis for terminating and repurposing existing wall system projects that are under construction or that have been obligated.
4. Whether the Department intends to only terminate and repurpose physical barrier construction contracts, or also critical 21st century technology contracts that are part of the wall system program such as for the Linear Ground Detection System.
5. What the administration supports in place of physical barriers to address the impedance and denial requirement of the Border Patrol.
6. If you support the continued construction of all wall system miles that funding has been obligated for.
7. If you support the continued construction of all wall system miles in the pre-construction phase for which money has already been identified.
8. If you would support wall system construction if included by Congress in future appropriations bills.
9. If you plan to order the deconstruction of any miles of wall system along the southwest border.
10. A detailed accounting of all funds previously identified for wall system construction through Congressional appropriations or reprogrammed from other agencies for wall system constructions as of January 19, 2021, that will be reprogrammed for other purposes and how that money will be spent instead.

We encourage you to provide the requested information expeditiously so we can adequately assess the border security implications of such actions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



JOHN KATKO
Ranking Member

cc:

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security