

District 6 Residents: contact Rep. Ciscomani to redirect FY25 Border Wall Appropriations

To District 6 Residents:

I just sent this email to Juan Ciscomani, House Rep from US District 6, requesting his support to redirect border wall funding from ongoing construction (DHS) to mitigation of ecological damage from wall construction (USFS and USDOJ).

Ciscomani has been part of the MAGA pro-wall contingent in the House and needs to hear from those of us who live in District 6 who want wall construction to stop and zombie construction funding to DHS to be transferred to natural resource agencies (USFA and USDOJ) to begin mitigation of ecological damage the wall has caused (some of the worst of which has been here in Dist. 6, in San Bernardino watershed).

District 6 map is here (note Bisbee has been gerrymandered out):

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/AZ/6>

The form for contacting him is here:

<https://sengov.com/arizona/juan-ciscomani/>

I urge you to to contact him too (you can use my letter as a template, but best to use your own words), and send copies of Rep Grijalva's letters (see box below) as I did.

Dear Rep. Ciscomani,

As you know, the border wall has been a fiscal waste, humanitarian disgrace, security farce and truly unmitigated ecological disaster -- in District 6 as throughout the length of the wall.

And yet, some in Congress for ideological and political purposes, and often due to ethnic prejudice, continue to support spending millions more tax dollars to build more wall.

I am writing to ask you, in your capacity as Representative of our border District and Member of the Appropriations Committee, to support redirection of funds originally allocated for DHS etc. to build the wall, to USFS and USDOJ to begin the decades-long task of mitigating ecological damage already done by the wall's construction and preventing damage that will otherwise occur.

Attached are copies of letters from Rep. Grijalva, the first a Dear Colleague letter to you and other Members of the House, the second to Chairman Joyce and ranking member Cuellar of the Homeland Security Subcommittee, requesting support in the FY 25 budget for rescission and

redirection of funds to authorize the needed redirection of funds and set border security efforts on a more appropriate course.

I urge you to sign on to Rep. Grijalva's letter and to support immediate stoppage of wall construction and mitigation of ecological damage from previous construction.

FY25 Support Rescission of Border Wall Funds and Transfer of Funds from DHS to DOI and USFS

Sending Office: Honorable Raul M. Grijalva
Sent By: Sayanna.Molina@mail.house.gov

QUILL LINK

FY24 signers: Titus, Barragán, Connolly, Carson, Jacobs, Huffman, Norton, Gomez, McGovern, DeSaulnier, Sánchez, Bowman, Raskin

Dear Colleague,

Please join me in urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security to rescind previously allocated border wall construction funds and to transfer at least \$225 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to remediate the incalculable damages caused by border wall construction under the previous administration. Border wall construction along the southern U.S.-Mexico border, as detailed by a report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), has had devastating impacts on the surrounding environment, wildlife, communities, sacred tribal sites, and cultural resources.

The previous administration exacerbated the border wall's destruction by continuously and recklessly waiving dozens of environmental and cultural protection laws in the process, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, among others.

We must prioritize remediation efforts to help the impacted communities, environment, and wildlife along the border recover from the undue damage caused by the previous administration.

Please find the letter text below. If you have any questions, please contact Sayanna Molina in my office at sayanna.molina@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva

Member of Congress

Dear Chair Joyce and Ranking Member Cuellar,

As you begin the process of crafting Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) appropriations bills, we strongly urge you to rescind previous border wall construction funding and transfer funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to remediate the incalculable environmental and cultural resource damage caused by border wall construction.

Border wall construction along the southern U.S.-Mexico border has had devastating effects on nearby communities, sacred tribal sites, cultural resources, the environment, and wildlife. A report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) describes some of the most egregious impacts of border wall construction on our environment and cultural heritage, including the following:

- Destruction of Indigenous sacred sites and burial grounds, including Monument Hill and Quitobaquito Springs.

- Depletion of precious scarce water resources in some areas, like the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, and damming or flooding in others.

- Disruption of critical wildlife migration patterns, which puts endangered species, including the ocelot, at even greater risk of extinction.

- Decimation of native plants, including untold numbers of the iconic saguaro cactus, which has enabled the proliferation of invasive species.

- Dangerously severe erosion in areas where vegetation was cleared without proper environmental assessment, including the Pajarito Mountains in Coronado National Forest.

The previous administration exacerbated the border wall's destruction by continuously and recklessly waiving dozens of environmental and cultural protection laws in the process, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, among others. Unfortunately, the Biden administration also used this waiver authority last year, further endangering public health and safety, the environment, historic and cultural sites, and religious freedoms.

Making the devastation even more needless, the border wall is not an effective national security strategy; the vast majority of drugs crossing the southwest border, including fentanyl, enter through legal U.S. ports of entry. The wall is also not an effective immigration policy, as it can be climbed over, cut through, or tunneled under. Real solutions include modernizing ports of entry, expanding legal pathways for migrants, and addressing the root causes of migration.

Extensive work is needed to remedy the significant natural and cultural damage caused by border wall construction. First and foremost, any remaining funding for border wall construction should be rescinded by Congress and fully transferred to DOI and USFS for remediation purposes. Specifically, we urge you to consider the following FY25 requests:

Rescind all previously allocated border wall construction funding, bar the use of any funds to construct any portion of a “border wall system” in areas exempted by Congress from a border wall, and provide no new funding for border wall construction or for construction of non-wall border barrier infrastructure, except that necessary for management, life, health and safety, and wildlife crossings. Any funding that is not rescinded threatens the border region and any possible remediation.

Transfer at least \$225 million in funding from DHS to DOI and USFS for remediation of damage caused by border wall construction, as outlined in the FY25 President’s Budget, thereby ensuring that DOI plays a leading role in the necessary restoration and remediation of the borderlands.

In addition, the recent GAO report recommended that U.S. Customs and Border Protection and DOI jointly document a strategy, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities, for mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources. Both agencies concurred with the recommendation. The FY25 funding legislation should therefore direct DHS and DOI to draft a comprehensive strategy that incorporates meaningful consultation from local governments, tribes, communities, scientists, environmental experts, and other expert stakeholders.

We must prioritize remediation efforts to help the communities, environment, and wildlife along the border recover from the undue damage caused by unnecessary border wall construction. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[1] U.S. General Accounting Office, Southwest Border: Additional Actions Needed to Address Cultural and Natural Resource Impacts from Barrier Construction (Sept. 5, 2023) (GAO-23-105443).

[2] Pursuant to the REAL ID Act of 2005, which amended section 102 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, the DHS Secretary has the authority to waive all legal requirements, as determined to be necessary, in the Secretary’s sole discretion, to ensure expeditious construction of barriers and roads along the border. Pub. L. No. 104-208, div. C, tit. I, subtit. A, § 102(c), 110 Stat. 3009, 3009-555, as amended by Pub. L. No. 109-13, div. B, tit. I, § 102, 119 Stat. 231, 306 (classified, as amended, at 8 U.S.C. § 1103 note).

[3] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Determination Pursuant to Section 102 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, as Amended, 88 Fed. Reg. 69214 (Oct. 5, 2023).

[4] Drug Seizure Statistics FY2023, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Oct. 06, 2023, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics>.