

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C., 20301

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C., 20530

Dear Secretary Esper, Acting Secretary Wolf, and Attorney General Barr:

While our country fights to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, continuing border wall construction places local communities at unnecessary risk. We request that during this crisis, all border wall construction halt immediately.

Currently, the primary threat to the United States is the spread of COVID-19. This deadly virus has killed thousands of our fellow citizens, sparked a global pandemic, and tremendously slowed the United States economy. Money should be invested in healthcare, small businesses, and fighting the spread of COVID-19, not used to build an ineffective and wasteful border wall that does not solve our immigration crisis or protect our homeland. We should be using all resources and funding to combat this virus and protect Americans, instead of using critical funding and resources to continue the construction of a border wall.

The construction of a wall puts workers, law enforcement personnel, and border residents in immediate danger. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has outlined social distancing and quarantine policies, which further wall construction defies. Those who are tasked with building this wall are susceptible to not only contracting COVID-19, but also risk spreading the virus to others. Continuation of construction only exacerbates the public health risks for those living at the southern border, detracting from our national efforts against fighting this virus.

At this juncture, the priority of the United States must be to stop the spread of COVID-19. The continuation of wall construction compromises those efforts. For these reasons, we ask that you take all steps necessary to ensure that border communities are protected from the unnecessary risk of infection during this pandemic and utilize critical resources to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Martin Heinrich
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/ Edward J. Markey
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed
Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

/s/ Kamala D. Harris
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
Tom Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Kristen Gillibrand
Kristen Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ Charles E. Schumer
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall
Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Elizabeth Warren
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ Patrick Leahy
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez
Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Bernard Sanders
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator