



Fiscal Year 2018 Rio Grande Valley Levee/Border Wall System Construction Projects Webinar

Supplementary Information on the Presentation

October 30, 2018

Slide 1 - Title Slide

Rio Grande Valley Sector:

Border Wall System Construction Projects Overview and Public Input Submission

Webinar | Presentation

October 30, 2018

Slide 2 - Webinar Objectives

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection, also known as CBP, has been collecting information and data from the public to help inform the review process of the Fiscal Year 2018 levee/border wall system construction projects located in the Rio Grande Valley. The government's fiscal year is from October 1st through September 30th. This webinar provides information about projects FUNDED by the FY18 appropriation. The intent for this webinar is to:

- Provide background and an overview of the projects,
- Detail the various ways that stakeholders can provide information and contribute feedback, and finally,
- Answer questions you may have about the project that can help inform your comments.

Slide 3 - Topics to be Covered

The general topics that will be covered are:

- The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Mission and Values;
- An overview of the relevant projects, including funding;
- The Secretary of Homeland Security's Waiver, including what it is and what affects it has;
- You will receive an overview on Public Input, specifically, information on how you can submit comments and stay informed;
- And a questions and answers session.

Slide 4 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection

- The CBP Mission is to safeguard America's borders and prevent terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States, while also facilitating the flow of legitimate trade and travel.
- In supporting CBP's mission, U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) is charged with establishing and maintaining operational control of the borders of the United States.
- The Border Patrol is specifically responsible for patrolling nearly 6,000 miles of Mexican and Canadian international land borders.
- It is also responsible for over 2,000 miles of coastal waters surrounding the Florida Peninsula and the island of Puerto Rico.



- The Rio Grande Valley Sector, or RGV, covers 34,000 square miles including 315 border miles.

The Rio Grande Valley Sector is the busiest sector in the nation and fiscal year to date accounts for more than 40% of the illegal immigrant apprehensions and more than 43% of the seized marijuana in the southwest border. Although the Rio Grande Valley accounts for a large percentage of the southwest border illegal alien apprehensions and narcotic seizures, the majority of its activity is occurring in areas where RGV has limited infrastructure, access and mobility, and technology.

In order to achieve operational control of the border, CBP uses multiple tools and techniques to accomplish their mission.

Slide 5 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Some of these tools and techniques are:

- Physical barriers, the focus of today's webinar
- Surveillance
- Sensors
- Aircraft sightings
- Interpreting and following tracks
- And traffic checkpoints

A mix of these tools and techniques are used to safeguard and protect our country's borders, but may vary by geographic location. The location which is the focus of this webinar is the Rio Grande Valley and the levee/border wall system projects funded in fiscal year 2018.

Slide 6 - Project Overview

- As a result of the Pedestrian Fence Project executed in 2008 and 2009, the Rio Grande Valley Sector has approximately 20 miles of existing levee wall system in Hidalgo County and approximately 34 miles of bollard wall system in Cameron County.
- The upcoming construction projects include the design and construction of:
 - Approximately 25 miles of levee wall system in Hidalgo County and
 - Approximately eight miles of border wall system in Starr County with an option for an additional four (4) miles.
- Construction timelines on these projects are still being defined, but could begin as early as February 2019.

Slide 7 - Hidalgo County Map

Regarding the approximately 25 miles of levee wall system in Hidalgo County, designated in green and gold on the map, the alignment would be situated on the riverside or south side of the U.S. International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC) levee. The red on the map designates the existing barrier. The design includes a reinforced concrete levee wall system to the approximate height of the existing levee with 18-foot tall steel bollards installed on the top of the levee wall system.

The project would also include a 150-foot enforcement zone starting at the base of the vertical levee wall system and extending outward, detection and surveillance technology that would be incorporated into the



levee wall system, automated vehicle gates or pedestrian gates, an all-weather patrol road that would run parallel to the levee wall system, and enforcement zone lighting.

Note that the wall is not located exactly on the border, which is the middle of the Rio Grande River. Alignment of the wall will be on the IBWC levee.

Slide 8 - Starr County Map

Regarding the approximately 8 to 12 miles of border wall system in Starr County, the design includes 18-foot tall steel bollards, detection and surveillance technology that would be incorporated into the border wall design, vehicle and pedestrian gates, and an all-weather patrol road. It would also include lighting, and a 150-foot enforcement zone starting at the base of the vertical levee wall system and extending outward.

The blue segments on the map represent the 8-12 miles of proposed border wall system in Starr County.

Slide 9 - How Will the Project Be Funded?

- CBP has received many questions from the public on how this project will be funded. As previously mentioned, the Government's Fiscal Year is from October 1st through September 30th.
- CBP operates under an annual budget based on appropriations from Congress. For FY18, CBP received approximately \$1.3 billion for border security projects along the U.S. southwest border.
- Among the \$1.3B for border security, Congress specifically appropriated funds for planning and construction of border infrastructure in the Rio Grande Valley.

Slide 10 - Rio Grande Valley Waiver

- On October 11, the Secretary of Homeland Security determined, as authorized by Congress, that it is necessary to waive certain laws in order to ensure the expeditious construction of barriers and roads in Hidalgo County, Texas. The October 11th waiver covers two projects and approximately 14 miles of levee wall construction. The Secretary of Homeland Security's waiver authority is set out in Section 102(c) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, as amended ("IIRIRA").
- The waiver authority allows the Secretary to waive all legal requirements that the Secretary deems necessary to construct barriers and roads to deter illegal entry into the United States.
- The new segments of the levee/border wall system construction will augment the existing wall infrastructure by closing a substantial amount of border gaps along the border in Hidalgo County that were not previously completed during the 2008 wall construction.
- The Department previously exercised the waiver authority ten times: (1) five times between 2005 to 2008; (2) on two occasions in 2017 (San Diego and Calexico); and three times in 2018 (Santa Teresa, Gates, and RGV 2 -3), including the October 11th waiver we will discuss in a moment.
- The waiver issued on October 11th includes various environmental, natural resource, and land management laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- The waiver, however, does not impact the consultation process required for the acquisition of private property. That said, CBP remains committed to responsible environmental stewardship and planning and implementing the intent and purpose of these laws.

Slide 11 - Rio Grande Valley Waiver Map



- This slide illustrates the segments of the Fiscal Year 2018 Rio Grande Valley projects that are covered under waiver.

Slide 12 - Environmental Planning

While the waiver eliminates CBP's obligation to comply with certain environmental laws for this project, again, CBP remains committed to environmental stewardship. In doing so, CBP creates an Environmental Stewardship Plan which includes:

- Identifying areas of potential impacts and areas of concern;
- Establishing best management practices for construction;
- Implementing mitigation measures that would either avoid to the greatest extent practicable or minimize impacts to the environment.
- Environmental planning is informed by:
 - Considering **existing** environmental data, which means using data and information that has been derived from recent environmental reviews within the project area;
 - CBP is also continuing to gather **new** data through requests for information and through the execution of field surveys for biological, cultural, and natural resources within the project area to assess potential impacts; and
 - Consulting and coordinating with relevant federal, state, and local stakeholders.
- Additionally, CBP is also seeking input on culture, commerce, and quality of life.

Slide 13 - Project Input Overview

- CBP continues to seek input on potential impacts to the environment; related comments and information will be accepted until November 6, 2018.
- Comments should include data or information that could help inform CBP's analysis of potential impacts.
- Helpful comments are fact-based and provide links to data or research. They should provide specific information concerning potential impacts to:
 - Biological, cultural, and natural resources;
 - As well as potential impacts to quality of life and commerce.
- If known, any comment provided should include any state and local restrictions, permitting or other requirements that CBP should consider during project siting, construction, and operation.
- Also, please feel free to provide comments that cover any or all of the listed topics, including those which may not be captured on the slide.
- Once the comment period has closed, comments and input will be used to inform our environmental review. Following the comment period, CBP will be developing a report summarizing the comments received and how they will be addressed. This report will be posted on the website and distributed to those who requested project updates.

Slide 14 - How Can the Public Submit Comments?

To submit comments until the November 6th date, you have a couple of options:

- First, we have an email address. All comments can be emailed to CBP at commentsenv@cbp.dhs.gov. Once again, that's commentsenv@cbp.dhs.gov. Please include "FY18



RGV Border Construction Projects” in the title of your email. Also, if you are providing a comment about an area or region, please specify that in your comment.

- Second, if your preference is to send a letter or documents via postal service, our mailing address is also on the slide.
- Please know that comments received related to this project, including names and addresses of those who comment, will become part of the public record.

Slide 15 - How Can the Public Stay Informed?

Once you have submitted your comments, you can use the same email to request to receive project updates.

- If you would like to be added to the project email list to receive updates and notifications, simply email the word “subscribe” to commentsenv@cbp.dhs.gov.
- If at any time you would like to be removed from the list, please send us an email to the same address, commentsenv@cbp.dhs.gov, with the word “unsubscribe.”
- Further information, including Spanish-language materials, is available on CBP.gov on the link on your screen.