



Fiscal Year 2020  
El Paso Additional Bollard Wall and Gates  
Stakeholder Feedback Report

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## 1. Introduction and Background

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposes to construct approximately 0.09 miles of 18-foot bollard wall and associated gates to support U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) operations (the Proposed Action). Currently, a gap exists between where the border wall ends, southwest of the Leon Wasteway Spillway, and the existing wire mesh fence begins. The new border wall system would close the gap between the border wall and legacy fence while providing access through three gates that will improve security for the El Paso area.

As part of the planning process for the Proposed Action, CBP sought input from the public and other stakeholders concerning potential impacts of the new border wall system, including potential impacts to the environment, culture, commerce, and quality of life. This input will be considered as a part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis CBP is conducting for the Proposed Action.

### *1.1 Purpose of this Report*

The purpose of this report is to summarize the input received during the public comment process and provide stakeholders and the public transparency into the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic issues that CBP will consider in its NEPA analysis. It does not present individual comments received or provide responses to the comments.

## 2. Public Input Process

From August 5, 2020 to September 4, 2020, CBP collected input regarding potential impacts to the environment, culture, commerce, and quality of life. CBP sent informational materials to federal, state, and local agencies, landowners, environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local tribes, and academics and solicited input on potential impacts. CBP also solicited input from the general public. Comments were collected through e-mail and mail. The notification and informational materials are included as an appendix to this report.

### *2.1 Public Feedback Review*

All comments received by CBP have been reviewed and categorized. A total of nine comments were received during the comment period and all were determined to be unique. As the comments were received, they were reviewed and categorized by their primary topic of concern – environmental, economic, cultural, or quality of life. If a comment included substantive information on multiple topics, it was included in each relevant category.

The Infrastructure Portfolio Outreach Team reviewed all comments received during the comment period, responded to comments as appropriate, and prepared this report to summarize public input. The comment review was conducted based on explicit concerns; comments that were not specific or contained vague statements were not interpreted by the reviewers. Comments that provided substantive information were further assessed by CBP.



As a next step, CBP will prepare and complete its NEPA analysis of the Proposed Action. The NEPA analysis utilize existing environmental field survey data, as well as incorporate relevant information and data obtained from the public feedback process.

### **3. Summary of Public Feedback**

The following summarizes important considerations for CBP’s review of potential impacts provided by the public during the comment period. CBP identified four (4) categories of primary feedback received.

#### *3.1 Wildlife/Habitat*

Two (2) commenters expressed concern that the border wall system could damage the unique ecosystem and wildlife in the area. Commenters suggested the border wall system could have a negative effect on various endangered or threatened species that inhabit the area. Specific species mentioned included the Western burrowing owl, Pecos River muskrat, and Desert pocket gopher.

One commenter also stated that the border wall could interrupt and prevent the migration of animals, as well as fragment and destroy habitat. The commenter noted that building a border wall would reduce the area’s quality and connectivity of plant and animal habitats.

#### *3.2 Air Quality*

One (1) commenter expressed concern that construction of the border wall system could potentially cause short-term impacts on air quality. The commenter recommended that fugitive dust source controls, mobile/stationary source controls, and administrative controls be included in the Construction Emissions Mitigation Plan in order to reduce any potential construction-related impacts.

#### *3.3 Historic and Cultural Preservation*

One (1) commenter noted that unidentified or undiscovered historic, archaeological, and cultural resources could be potentially impacted due to the construction of the border wall system. The commenter did not identify any specific historic and/or cultural properties but recommended having cultural monitors onsite during construction.

#### *3.4 Water and Flood Impacts*

One (1) commenter mentioned the potential for greater flooding impacts due to border wall construction. The commenter indicated that the border wall could block the natural flow of water and cause flooding in border communities and protected wildlife areas.



#### 4. Review Next Steps

Stakeholder feedback, along with information from previous surveys of the project area, will inform CBP's NEPA analysis of the Proposed Action.