



July 16, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

RE: Friendship Park Border Wall Project

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

On behalf of the California Latino Legislative Caucus, we write to strongly urge you to terminate all border wall construction projects at Friendship Park, located in San Diego, California.

On January 20, 2021, President Biden issued Proclamation 10142, which paused all border projects along the United States-Mexico border and directed federal agencies to review the funding procedures and impacts of these projects. As Proclamation 10142 stated, *“building a massive wall is not a serious policy solution and is a waste of American taxpayer dollars that diverts attention away from genuine threats to our homeland security”*. We believe the Friendship Park Border Wall Project falls within that definition.

Friendship Park has served as a binational meeting place secured by Border Patrol agents for over 50 years for friends and family who otherwise cannot be together in either country. In 2019, over 2,300 families entered this shared space to connect with their loved ones. The current project slated for Friendship Park is a 30-foot bollard-style Trump wall that would end a legacy of cooperation in the San Diego-Tijuana region. In addition, this project would have detrimental impacts on safety, life and the environment, contrary to the Department of Homeland Security’s May 27, 2022 project re-authorization goals. Multiple secure walls are already located at Friendship Park, and since no public access is included as part of the wall replacement project, there seems to be no real purpose for this other than the destruction of Friendship Park itself.

Friendship Park serves as a beacon for the people of California, and represents our countries shared historical, cultural, economic and social commitments. If any funds are used at Friendship Park, it should be to protect and enhance our important and unique binational relationship through continued safe access for future generations. Any funds allocated to this border wall project could be used to mitigate the ongoing crisis of transboundary flows of sewage, solid waste and toxic sediment which has put public health and environment at risk for over five decades.

Due to the significant and severe environmental, public safety, cultural and financial concerns with constructing the replacement border barriers at Friendship Park, we respectfully request that the Friendship Park Border Wall Project be permanently terminated.

(CHAIR)

Senator María Elena Durazo

(VICE CHAIR)

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions or need additional information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



MARIA ELENA DURAZO
Chair, CA Latino Legislative Caucus
Senator, 24th District



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Vice Chair, CA Latino Legislative Caucus
Assemblymember, 60th District



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