

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to request that you to immediately halt border wall construction as our nation confronts a global pandemic. Key federal agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, should be prioritizing COVID-19 response to stop the spread of the virus, assist local communities, and prevent the deaths of thousands of Americans. Yet, we are greatly concerned by a recent press report¹ that these agencies are devoting personnel and resources to escalate border wall construction.

The Department of Homeland Security and the Army Corps of Engineers are the primary federal agencies currently assisting health care workers and patients by building much-needed temporary medical facilities. As you announced Tuesday, the White House projections for infection and death are dramatically rising with Dr. Anthony Fauci stating that the country should be prepared for the likelihood of 100,000 American deaths.²

These grim forecasts prove that our health care system will continue to be overwhelmed by the growing number of patients in critical condition. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Homeland Security should not be sidetracked in their mission to support local healthcare providers by having to devote resources to border wall construction.

Additionally, there are serious concerns that border wall construction by its very nature can exacerbate the COVID-19 crisis. In many cases, construction workers travel from all over our country, inundating rural border communities, to work and live in confined areas. These working conditions and the lack of enough health care providers in these small towns dramatically increases the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks.

Americans have seen their lives upended, havoc wreaked on their local economies, and they are still facing the threat of infection and death. Our government should not abandon our citizens in their hour of need. We must devote all resources of the Department of Homeland Security and the Army Corps of Engineers to addressing the COVID-19 crisis. Please stop the construction of the Border Wall.

Sincerely,



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

¹ Romero, Simon., "Border Wall Work in Arizona Speeds Up, Igniting Contagion Fears", The New York Times, March 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/us/coronavirus-border-wall-arizona.html>

² Fauci M.D., Anthony S., "Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing", The White House, March 31, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-15/>

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