

Trump Administration Waives Laws to Build 100 Miles of Border Wall Across Arizona National Monument, Wildlife Refuges

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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The Trump administration will waive dozens of environmental and public health laws to speed border-wall construction through federally protected sites in Arizona and California.

Today's announcement from the Department of Homeland Security says waivers will be used to build walls through [Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument](#), [Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge](#), [San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Coronado National Memorial](#) and numerous designated wilderness areas. The bollard-style barriers will block wildlife migration, damage ecosystems and harm border communities.

"The Trump administration just ignored bedrock environmental and public health laws to plow a disastrous border wall through protected, spectacular wildlands," said **Laiken Jordahl**, borderlands campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity. "This senseless wall would rip a scar through the heart of the Sonoran Desert, kill endangered wildlife and cause irreversible damage. We'll do everything in our power to stop this destruction."

The three waivers sweep aside 41 laws that protect clean air, clean water, public lands and endangered wildlife. They cover plans to build more than 100 miles of wall in numerous Arizona [locations](#) and in California near [El Centro](#) and [San Diego](#).

With these waivers, which take effect Wednesday, the Trump administration will have issued 12 waivers under the REAL ID Act. The waivers come during an open [comment period](#) where the public is invited to weigh in with concerns. Comments remain open until July 5.



Map by Kara Clauser, Center for Biological Diversity.

The Center and allies have [sued](#) to challenge Trump's emergency declaration, which would fund this border wall construction. The Center also has sued the administration to challenge border-wall construction in the [Rio Grande Valley](#) and near the Santa Teresa Port of Entry in [New Mexico](#). The Center's first border-related [lawsuit](#) — filed in 2017 in U.S. District Court in Tucson with U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva — seeks to require the Trump administration to do a detailed analysis of the environmental impacts of its border-enforcement program. All of these suits are pending.

A 2017 [study](#) by the Center identified more than 90 endangered or threatened species that

would be threatened by wall construction along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border.

Beyond jeopardizing wildlife, endangered species and public lands, the U.S.-Mexico border wall is part of a larger strategy of ongoing border militarization that damages human rights, civil liberties, native lands, local businesses and international relations. The border wall impedes the natural migrations of people and wildlife that are essential to healthy diversity.

The waivers cast aside these laws:

1. National Environmental Policy Act
2. Endangered Species Act
3. Wilderness Act
4. Clean Water Act
5. American Indian Religious Freedom Act
6. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
7. National Historic Preservation Act
8. Migratory Bird Treaty Act
9. Migratory Bird Conservation Act
10. Clean Air Act
11. Archeological Resources Protection Act
12. Paleontological Resources Preservation Act
13. Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988
14. Safe Drinking Water Act
15. Noise Control Act
16. Solid Waste Disposal Act
17. Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
18. Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
19. Antiquities Act
20. Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act
21. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
22. Farmland Protection Policy Act
23. Federal Land Policy and Management Act
24. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act
25. National Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956
26. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
27. National Trails System Act
28. Administrative Procedure Act
29. Wild Horse and Burro Act
30. Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
31. National Park Service Organic Act
32. National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978
33. 50 Stat. 1827 (April 13, 1937);
34. Arizona Desert Wilderness Act
35. Arizona -Idaho Conservation Act of 1988
36. Coronado National Memorial Enabling Legislation
37. Coronado National Memorial Management Policies
38. National Forest Management Act of 1976
39. Multiple-Use and Sustained-Yield Act of 1960
40. Eagle Protection Act
41. Reclamation Project Act of 1939

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Featured image: Border wall stretches for miles into the rolling landscape on the outskirts of Nogales, Arizona. This kind of fencing is impassable to most wingless wildlife. Photo by Rebecca Kessler for Mongabay.

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