



February 28, 2017

The Honorable Susana Martinez
Governor of New Mexico
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Martinez,

As faith, conservation, and community leaders from New Mexico, we respectfully ask that you act in the best interest of New Mexicans to oppose the construction of President Trump's proposed border wall on our state's 179 miles of land bordering Mexico.

Mexico is our state's largest trading partner, representing more than \$1.68 billion in goods and services exchanged annually. International trade, including exports and imports, support more than 217,000 New Mexico jobs - that's one in five. As you know, success in the export market is critical to diversifying our state's economy. The volatility of global energy markets has had a profound effect on New Mexico's families and economy, most recently leading to a \$69 million state budget shortfall and a projected deficit of \$250 million in 2018.

By opposing this border wall, and instead promoting a political, financial, and economic climate where trade with Mexico is valued and encouraged, New Mexico can grow its burgeoning international trade sector in areas such as Santa Teresa and Columbus. The Mexican import tariffs proposed by the Trump administration to force Mexico to finance the construction of this wall would have a profound impact on the ability of our state to grow this international trade sector and create new, sustainable jobs. A recent study by WalletHub indicates that New Mexico would be the fourth state most economically impacted by a trade war with Mexico, a reality that New Mexican families simply cannot afford.

Additionally, New Mexico benefits from vast, open areas on its southern border that are yet to be developed for industrial, light manufacturing, storage, warehouse, and logistics businesses. These businesses are being actively recruited by publically and privately funded economic development organizations because of the potential growth opportunities that our border represents - a competitive advantage over other border states. Trump's proposed border wall could also severely hamper initiatives to build a planned bi-national railway that would bring additional economic opportunities and jobs to our state and southern border and complement Union Pacific's \$400 million rail facility just built in Santa Teresa.

New Mexico shares a rich bi-national culture with Mexico dating back centuries. In Columbus, for example, during the Bi-National Cavalry Trail Remembrance Day, riders on horseback from both countries come together and cross the border in a sign of friendship and remembrance of the Punitive Expedition, an event widely advertised by the New Mexico Department of Tourism. For at least a decade, the City of Sunland Park, neighbor to Anapra, Mexico, has sought to build an international pedestrian crossing to increase visitation from Mexican tourists and to facilitate visitation between families who live on both sides of the border.

Each year, the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Las Cruces and El Paso host a joint pilgrimage at Mount Cristo Rey, a symbolic mountain that straddles the New Mexico, Mexico, and Texas borders, in a show of cultural and spiritual unity. Across from Antelope Wells, New Mexico, planners from the state of Chihuahua are nearing the final stages of completing a bi-national road to connect our two countries and spur new economic development opportunities and further strengthen the ties between New Mexico and the States of Chihuahua and Sonora. In Doña Ana County, the Mexican national flag is emblazoned in the plaza of the Town of Mesilla, a tribute to the Doña Ana Bend Colony, the Mexican land grant colony that paved the way for the modern-day Mesilla Valley.

Building a border wall in New Mexico to divide our two nations would undermine centuries of shared history between our two countries that brings New Mexicans pride, a sense of identity, and tourism opportunities.

Life on our border extends beyond human habitation and a shared culture. In the vast Chihuahuan Desert and Coronado National Forest, thousands of diverse wildlife species thrive and migrate across our shared border for survival. The heart of one of the the largest and most ecologically diverse wildlife corridors in all of the Americas exists at the center of the wall's proposed construction site. The southern end of the Rocky Mountains, the northern end of the Sierra Madres and the edges of both the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts all intersect on New Mexico's border.

Regional native species, including desert bighorn sheep, Sonoran pronghorn, Coues deer, jaguar to myriad game and songbirds and non-game mammals and reptiles depend upon the unwalled border corridor for their survival. These species migrate across the different existing international barriers in search of food, mates, sources of water, and to ensure the survival of their species. Beyond our shared responsibility to co-habitate with wildlife, these species also serve critical needs to the people of New Mexico, including the sustainability of our food supply, economic development through hunting, wildlife watching, and other recreation opportunities, and also help ensure we keep our desert and forest ecosystems in conditions that mitigate the impact of flash flooding and forest fires. Additionally, the Mexican government has stated its opposition to the border wall on many grounds, including the negative impacts on shared ecosystems and wildlife corridors along the border that both countries mutually manage.

The construction of such a wall on New Mexico's border would have devastating impacts on our economy, our shared bi-national culture, and our environment and wildlife. New Mexico is a land of inclusivity - not a place that turns people away and turns its back on its shared culture. In the best interest of the people of New Mexico, we ask that you do everything within your power to oppose the border wall proposed by President Trump's Administration within the boundaries of the State of New Mexico.

With gratitude,

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City of Las Cruces City Council