



Texas Conservation Alliance (TCA) believes border security is an essential responsibility of the federal government. Texans value safety, the rule of law, and effective management of our international borders. For those who live and work in the Trans-Pecos, security is not abstract, and landowners and local communities deserve solutions that address border-related security needs.

At the same time, how border security is achieved matters.

The Big Bend region is one of our most beloved and iconic landscapes. Big Bend National Park, Big Bend Ranch State Park, and surrounding private ranchlands form an interconnected system of desert, river, and mountain habitat that supports wide-ranging wildlife, including migratory species that depend on cross-border movement and genetic exchange. The Rio Grande is not only a geopolitical boundary — it is a living river system that sustains recreation, local communities, and wildlife on both sides of the border.

While illegal border crossing activity does occur in this region, enforcement patterns have historically been far more concentrated in other sectors of the Texas–Mexico border. The remoteness and rugged terrain of Big Bend naturally limit cross-border movement, raising practical questions about the necessity and feasibility of large-scale wall construction.

Construction would also require significant condemnation of private property under eminent domain, trampling on long-standing property rights. Wall infrastructure would affect public access to the Rio Grande and to portions of Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park — access that supports recreation, local outfitters, and a tourism economy central to many West Texas communities.

TCA believes that a continuous physical border wall in the Big Bend region does not represent the most effective approach to security. Permanent barriers fragment habitat, restrict river access, interfere with working lands, and disrupt wildlife migration corridors. Once constructed, these landscape impacts cannot be undone.

Alternative strategies — including advanced surveillance technology, targeted infrastructure, and appropriately deployed personnel — can enhance border security in ways that are cost-effective, more adaptable, and less disruptive. In a region defined by sensitive ecosystems and challenging terrain, flexible approaches are likely to prove more practical over time.

What is at stake in the region is nothing less than the integrity of one of the most remote, ecologically intact, and culturally significant landscapes in Texas. Federal planning maps indicate that more than 100 miles of border wall infrastructure could extend along the Rio Grande corridor within Big Bend National Park — nearly the entirety of the park’s river boundary. Additional segments are identified through Big Bend Ranch State Park and continuing through the Lower Canyons toward Amistad National Recreation Area. Taken together, publicly available documents show plans for hundreds of miles of new or expanded barrier infrastructure across the Trans-Pecos, including stretches of the Rio Grande formally designated as Wild and Scenic River and landscapes recognized for their extraordinary ecological, cultural, and historical significance.

What is clear is this: construction at that magnitude would fundamentally alter one of the most intact desert river systems in North America — fragmenting habitat, restricting river access, affecting working ranchlands, and reshaping landscapes that have remained largely uninterrupted for generations.

This is not a partisan position. It is a conservation position grounded in stewardship of public lands and respect for private property rights. TCA urges policymakers to pursue border security solutions in the Trans-Pecos that safeguard both the safety of Texans and the integrity of one of our state’s most extraordinary landscapes.