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Contact: Matthew Johnson, matt.johnson@sierraclub.org, 512-888-9398

## **Biden Administration Waives 26 Federal Laws to Build New Border Wall in Texas' Rio Grande Valley**

***Decision continues Bush and Trump-era policies to advance violent separation of families and destruction of sensitive habitat for endangered ocelot***

**Austin, TX** – On October 4, President Biden used a provision in law frequently used by the Trump Administration to waive 26 federal laws to construct walls along the southern border of Texas. This is the first time the Biden Administration has used these harmful waivers to ignore important environmental and cultural considerations relative to these lands. Today the President defended the decision stating that his hands are tied and he must spend congressional funds already allocated for the wall.

The Sierra Club opposes the border wall, increased militarization of the Texas and Southwest states, and invasive security infrastructure. Previous wall construction has cut through a [federal wildlife preserve](#), [Tribal lands](#), and a [sacred Arizona spring](#), among many other important sites home to [endangered species, diverse plant life, and more than 400 species of birds](#).

“Donald Trump and Congress created a problem when they launched construction of this ineffective, destructive, and racist border wall, and President Biden isn’t standing up to stop it,” said **Dave Cortez, Director of the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter in Texas**. “Continuing to build this mistake causes damage to frontera families and communities, migratory wildlife like the endangered ocelot, border ecosystems, and the legacy of the United States as a place for refuge and safety. Simply put, border walls do nothing to address the humanitarian crisis of thousands of migrants seeking asylum and safety from violence in their home nations, while harming the landscapes that are so important to this country.”

**Erick Meza, Sierra Club Borderlands Coordinator**, added, “Since 2008, Sierra Club’s Borderlands program has been advocating to stop this ineffective way to approach this complex issue. We have seen closely over recent years the large negative impact the construction of border walls has on the environment and border communities. What we see are more migrant deaths, sacred Native American sites destroyed, critical wildlife corridors interrupted, the free flow of water blocked, and the erosion that has compromised the border infrastructure itself. All this money will be wasted without addressing any of the root causes of immigration and the worsening climate crisis. We can’t continue to ignore environmental laws; border communities deserve the same protection as the rest of the country. We urge President Biden and the Department of Homeland Security to do what is right and protect the environment and border communities.”