

## MEDIA ADVISORY

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**#NoBorderWall**

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### COALITION: NEW BORDER WALL CONTRACTS SHOULD BE CANCELLED

*Politicians in DC are going on \$1 Billion “spending spree” to prop up flagging re-election campaign, but Laredo residents will pay the price.*

**Laredo, TX** - As the COVID crisis death toll surpasses 200,000 and the nation’s deficit explodes to \$3 trillion, the U.S. government announced two new border wall contracts Wednesday morning awarded to companies under investigation for fraud or have amassed millions in violations, for construction on land that the U.S. government has not yet acquired.

The two new contracts - 27 miles to Fisher Sand & Gravel of North Dakota (\$285.15 million) and 13 miles to Southwest Valley Constructors, a subsidiary of Kiewit of Nebraska (\$201.25 million) - total \$484.4 million. To date, this brings the Laredo wall project to 71 riverfront miles at a staggering cost of over \$1.05 Billion.

#### A Desperate Last Minute Effort

After 4 years of slow progress, the administration is racing to [rush last minute construction](#). With only one month left, the wall remains a central piece of the administration’s electoral campaign, despite the lack of studies and evidence to prove that a wall is a national security solution, as per the [Department of Homeland Security’s own Inspector General](#) (<https://bit.ly/34bL6hp>).

In contrast, Vice President Joe Biden, if elected President, has promised: “There will not be another foot of wall constructed in my administration. End. Stop. Done. Over. Not going to do it. Withdraw the lawsuits. We’re out. We’re not going to confiscate the land.” ([The Hill](#), 8.6.10)

Meanwhile, the federal government is moving at a hurried pace to seize historic lands from the City of Laredo, Laredo College, and more than 700 private property owners in the Laredo Sector. In May, it waived 27 critical laws in Webb and Zapata, and plans call for destroying a total of 121 riverfront miles in Webb and Zapata counties to build a 30 foot steel wall and a new militarized enforcement zone with off-limit government roads, surveillance towers, and high intensity flood lights.

“This has nothing to do with security. This is about politics and greed,” said Tricia Cortez, executive director of the Rio Grande International Study Center, a co-founder of the Laredo No Border Wall Coalition. “These contractors know the end may be coming and the wall may never be built, so they hope to go on a spending spree to get as much of our taxpayer money as they can before their time runs out.”



“To be fair to the President, he has contributed \$750 of his own money,” added Chris Rincon, a historic preservationist in San Ygnacio. “However the other \$1 Billion is being paid for by us.”

### **Criminal Investigation**

One of the contractors, Fisher Industries, is in the midst of a federal investigation and was the center of a “[60 Minutes](#)” [exposé](#) earlier this week, for the billions of dollars that they have received from the administration, despite their lack of experience and for their crumbling 3 mile border wall in Mission, TX that was built with funds from the “We Build The Wall” campaign, whose founders [have been arrested for fraud](#).

Unfortunately, CBP also failed to provide the public with any maps, renderings, or critical environmental and flood studies along the river, an international waterway that serves as the only source of drinking water for Laredo and many communities along the border.

“They aren’t showing us renderings because if the public saw what the actual plan was, they would be against it.” said Valentin Ruiz, Coalition member and U.S. Army veteran. “The wall cuts us off from the river that has been part of our 265 year history. To me, that river is our Statue of Liberty. They might as well be putting her in jail.”

### **A Path Of Destruction**

At 30 feet tall, the wall would be more than twice the height of the Berlin wall, and effectively create a prison-style boundary along the side of the “gateway city”. It will be accompanied by a 200 foot wide “security corridor” with law enforcement only roads, floodlights and surveillance towers, effectively creating a militarized zone across the entire region.

“There is no crisis here. Laredo is actually one of the safest cities in America,” Ruiz said. “This is just election politics, but our community will pay the price for generations. This project would put our historic lands in the hands of the Federal Government, forever. Anyone, liberal, independent or self-respecting conservative should be against it.”

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*The #NoBorderWall Laredo Coalition is a network of residents, elected officials, & organizations who oppose the border wall.*

Website: [www.noborderwallcoalition.com](http://www.noborderwallcoalition.com) | [facebook.com/NoBorderWallCoalition](https://facebook.com/NoBorderWallCoalition) | Insta: @noborderwall\_itx

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