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April 27, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I believe your Administration has the potential to make history, and it is my hope that you will listen to the people of South Texas about the policies that impact our home. Mr. President, please let this letter be the end of more than thirty years of partisan gridlock, and the beginning of a new way forward on immigration and border security. While I am not in favor of open, uncontrolled borders, I have long asserted that a physical barrier “from sea to shining sea” is nothing more than a boondoggle. I was relieved to see your *Proclamation on the Termination Of Emergency With Respect To The Southern Border Of The United States And Redirection Of Funds Diverted To Border Wall Construction* but recent events have given me cause for concern.

My constituents and I understood this proclamation as a pause on the construction and funding for the border wall, and an end to the Trump Administration’s emergency declaration. We interpreted this to mean that the waivers that authorized land acquisition were also terminated; necessitating additional steps by the government prior to moving forward with wall construction.

However, a recent decision out of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas contradicts this Executive Order. In *The United States of America vs. 6.584 ACRES OF LAND, more or less, Hidalgo County, Texas; Eloise Rosa Cavazos; et al.*, Civ. Action No. 7:20-cv-00244, (S.D. TX) April, 2021 the court issued an order under the takings clause of the United States Constitution for the purposes of border wall construction. South Texans are concerned that these land takings do not align with the promise of “not another foot” and are seeking answers about why the U.S. Department of Justice continues to pursue this.

Furthermore, construction of the wall caused flooding issues when it breached a levee in Precinct 3 of Hidalgo County. With hurricane season quickly approaching, we are urgently seeking your assistance to restore flood mitigation infrastructure impacted by wall construction. We must not allow conditions to worsen, all the while taking lands from South Texans who have lived along the border for centuries.

I recently discussed these issues with Secretary Mayorkas and was not informed of additional takings planned in the 15th District of Texas. Please accept this letter as a request for notice of any and all planned work along the international boundary between the United States and Mexico located in my congressional district.

This administration cannot repeat the mistakes of the past with respect to our border communities. Our people should not be left on the wrong side of the wall, detached from the rest of the country, and left with land worth far less than it was absent a wall, and with no compensation for that loss. Our community continually bears the burden of failed policy, and when we offer solutions to the problems in our back yards, it appears that our voices are not heard.

With this in mind, I respectfully request a meeting with you and your top personnel overseeing the taking of lands along the Southern Border to discuss this urgent matter and how we may best move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VGMA', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress