

DHS issues waiver to ensure rapid construction of waterborne barriers in Texas

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WASHINGTON — Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem signed a waiver to ensure the expeditious construction of approximately 17 miles of waterborne barrier in Texas. The waterborne barrier will be constructed in the Rio Grande River in Cameron County, Texas within the U.S. Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley Sector. The RGV Waterborne Barrier Project has been solicited and is planned for award by the end of Fiscal Year 2025 utilizing U.S. Customs and Border Protection's FY 2021 appropriations. This is the sixth waiver signed by Secretary Noem for border barrier construction projects along the Southern border.

In a continuing effort to gain and maintain operational control of the Southern border, and in support of the President's Executive Orders, CBP continues to look for innovative ways to achieve this mission. A capability gap has been identified in waterways along the Southwest border where drug smuggling, human trafficking and other dangerous and illegal activity occurs. In response to this gap, CBP has identified the requirement for the construction of waterborne barriers to support the border security mission in waterways. In addition, waterborne barriers are intended to create a safer border environment for patrolling agents, as well as deter illegal aliens from attempting to illegally cross the border through dangerous waterways.

The Secretary's waiver authority allows DHS to waive any legal requirement, including environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, to ensure the expeditious construction of physical barriers and roads. Projects executed under a waiver are critical steps to secure the southern border and reinforce our commitment to border security.

The waiver was issued pursuant to Section 102 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

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