

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 29, 2023

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable Douglas Pitkin
Director
Bureau of Budget and Planning
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Director Young and Director Pitkin:

We write to urge the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Department of State to provide all necessary funding and programmatic support to the United States International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to address emergent infrastructure construction needs under its jurisdiction along the border in 2023 and in any Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 funding vehicles. We also ask that you prioritize funding for USIBWC construction as well as salaries and expenses in the FY 2025 budget submission and in future years to address chronic underinvestment that the Commission has recently confronted. This funding remains critical to supporting the safety, health and well-being, and prosperity of our districts and promoting the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship.

USIBWC plays a critical role enforcing U.S. compliance with boundary and water treaties and related agreements signed with Mexico in a manner that benefits the welfare and economic prosperity of America's border communities. Unfortunately, despite this mandate, USIBWC has not received adequate funding in recent years to either maintain its existing facilities or build new infrastructure to support its mission. In FY 2022, the President's Budget Request included \$51,970,000 for salaries and expenses and \$46,800,000 for planning and construction. The President's Budget Request for FY 2023 requested only an additional \$7.9 million for USIBWC salaries and expenses above the FY 2022 request and cut its submission for USIBWC's construction account by \$5,000,000 from the previous year's request. While Congress appropriated higher levels of funding for USIBWC planning and construction than the President requested in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, these funding levels are grossly inadequate and will continue to be insufficient if the administration does not prioritize higher funding requests for USIBWC in future budget submissions.

Lower funding levels force border districts to compete against one another for limited funding instead of constructively working with the Federal government to secure resources that benefit their communities. Although the House's Appropriations Committee \$146,530,000 mark for USIBWC in FY 2024 represents a more robust funding top-line than in previous years, more funding will be needed well into the future. We ask that you support the following requests to help USIBWC secure more funding for emergent construction needs in 2023 and consistent funding streams in future years:

- Reprogram available FY 2023 funding to address emergent USIBWC construction as needed;
- Engage Congress to ensure any end of year FY 2024 appropriations package includes Senate-passed language that would provide USIBWC with transfer authority from Federal and non-Federal sources as well as maximum funding for USIBWC construction projects; and
- Submit a budget to Congress that consistently funds USIBWC at the levels needed to build new and maintain existing border infrastructure as well as hire the personnel needed to operate these facilities.

Thank you for considering these requests. We look forward to working with you to ensure their success and passing any funding measures that reflect the spirit of these suggestions.

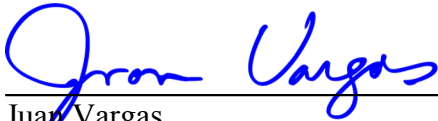
Sincerely,



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



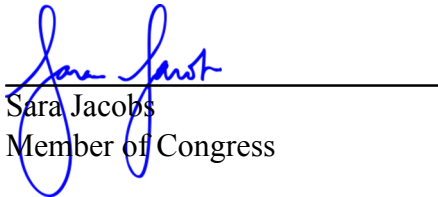
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



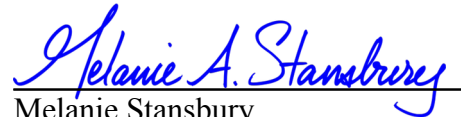
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



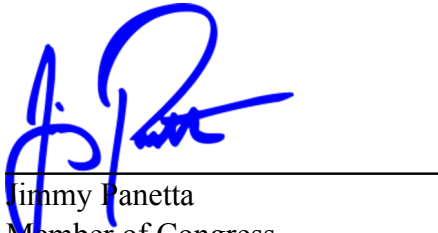
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vicente Gonzalez', written in a cursive style.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress