

**PRESS RELEASE - HIGH PRIORITY – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED November 26, 2020**

El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (District)

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**Public harm and damage will be caused to El Paso's Water Supply by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP)  
Construction of Secondary Border Barrier**

CBP has started construction on a Secondary Border Barrier on the north side (USA side) of the American Canal Extension which supplies the majority of raw water to the City of El Paso's at its Johnathan-Rogers Water Treatment Plant. Before this latest activity on the USA side, CBP recently finished improvements to the Border Fence construction on the south side (Mexico side) of the American Extension Canal extending the wall to a height of 34 feet and placing two rows of serpentine razor wire fencing on top of the fence (see picture below).



View of the Border Fence and American Canal Extension Where CBP is Constructing a Secondary Fence

The American Canal Extension was built in 1998 to conserve water and provide flood protection for El Paso and consists of a 1,500 cubic foot per second concrete canal with operation and maintenance roads (O&M roads) on both sides of the canal. The District and the City of El Paso paid the local cost share to construct the canal and the roads. In 2018, CBP constructed the border fence on the Mexico side of the canal which blocked the District's previous access to operate and maintain the canal from the south side. Now, CBP is setting out to construct a second similar fence on the north side of the canal. This second fence would cut off operation and maintenance access to the canal for the area between the two fences. When questioned by the District, CBP would not say why two fences were needed so close together. Currently, the USA-Mexico border in this area is already protected by the new 34' tall bollard fence on the south side, then a deep canal, and then a chain link security fence. This area is located in one of the most secure and actively patrolled areas of the entire border with Mexico (see aerial photograph on the next page).

The District has a long history of working with CBP to construct the border fence in a manner and at locations that protect both El Paso and the USA, while not harming the District's or City's critical infrastructure. The District is perplexed about why CBP is now taking unilateral action without working with the District to

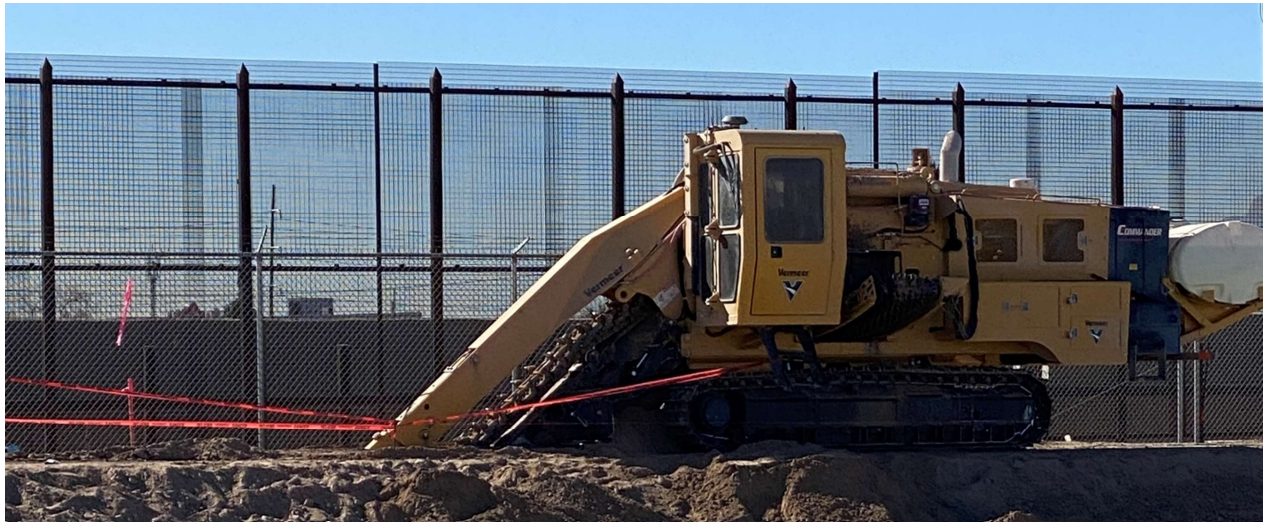
mitigate the harm to El Paso. CBP has failed to provide any justification for constructing a second fence, 30 feet tall, on the USA side of the canal. The District just learned of CBP's intentions yesterday when construction was initiated without the District's approval (see photograph of trenching machine on the next page) or without obtaining the approval of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Placement of the second fence in the middle of the District's O&M road will prevent the District from accessing this portion of the canal with the equipment needed to operating, maintain, and repair the canal. CBP's actions will put not only District employees' safety at risk, but also the people who live near the canal, who could face flooding from the canal. In addition, CBP's action will put the City of El Paso's and El Paso Valley farmers' water supply at risk. Finally, the canal provides flood protection to downtown El Paso. In the 2006 flood, this canal was critical in preventing serious flooding in the City of El Paso and the breaching of the Rio Grande levee system. The ability of the canal to provide flood protection also is threatened by CBP's actions.



Aerial View of the American Canal Extension on the Border Highway South of the Border Highway in El Paso, Texas near Bowie High School





Custom and Border Patrol Excavating a Trench in Middle of American Canal Extension O&M Road 11/26/2020



Location of CBP Secondary Border Fence In El Paso, Texas



Detailed Location of CBP Secondary Border Fence in El Paso, Texas