

RESOLUTION NO. 2007-071

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF BROWNSVILLE EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BORDER WALL ALONG THE BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS –MATAMOROS, MEXICO BORDER.

WHEREAS, we the City Commission and the residents of the City of Brownsville agree with Valley Interfaith that we should “Invest in families – not the wall”; and

WHEREAS, together with the Texas Border Coalition and the Rio Grande Valley Network of organizations oppose spending our tax dollars on the construction of an ineffective border wall that can easily be breached in seven (7) minutes; and

WHEREAS, \$1.2 billion of federal funds, intended for the border wall, should be invested in health care, housing, education, job training, and infrastructure that will provide a visible and tangible return such as reduction of diabetes, childhood obesity, and other preventable maladies; and

WHEREAS, the border wall represents a human rights crisis for indigenous peoples living along the borders and the human rights crisis at the southern border of the United States has resulted in over 4,000 migrant deaths in recent years, and

WHEREAS, the border wall will have devastating consequences on Texas border economies, environment, human rights, will result in landowners and farmers losing land and critical access to river water irrigation and, and will affect the relationship between the United States and Mexico, and

WHEREAS, the border wall will also affect historical sites along the Rio Grande River that are important to Brownsville such as: a national historic marker of Fort Texas, which is the site of the first battle of the Mexican-American War, the Palmetto Hill battle site, which is where the last battle of the civil war was fought, the Chisolm Trail historical site, which is the origin of the famous cattle drive to Kansas City, the Brownsville, Texas/Matamoros, Mexico ferry crossing historical site, which has been in operation since before international bridges were built; and

WHEREAS, the federal government, through its power to waive in their entirety the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archeological Resources Protection Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Noise Control Act, the Solid Waste Disposal Act, Endangered Species Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Farmland Protection Policy Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, would construct a border wall that would slice through the heart of the Rio Grande wildlife corridor, would clear hundreds of miles of riparian habitat affecting migrating birds, bats, butterflies, ocelots, and other wild animals, would adversely affect the ecosystems of the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, and World Birding Center, Roma Bluffs World Birding Center, the NABA International Butterfly Park, the Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary, the Nature Conservancy’s Southmost Preserve, and numerous United States Fish and Wildlife tracts that front the Rio Grande; and

WHEREAS, the border wall would provide a false sense of security based on the known fact that a wall can be easily breached within minutes, would not stop illegal border crossings, and would be less effective than a smart virtual fence which could be achieved through raising the river level to 26 feet above sea level, widening the river to 300 linear feet, via the construction of a weir dam; and

WHEREAS, together with the Texas Border Coalition we support alternatives to fencing that are smart and effective and ultimately achieve true security, such as the Vega Project in Webb County, the Eagle Pass Park Project, the Brownsville Weir and Reservoir Project, the IBWC's reinforcement of levees and the clearing of Rio Grande vegetation such as Carrizo cane that provides hiding places for illegal immigration and other illegal activity; and

WHEREAS, we support physical barriers, in remote areas where they make sense, and they are agreed to by County and Municipal officials and we strongly support smarter, more effective solutions where fences would be ineffective, that include radar, cameras, sensors, and more effective deployment of Border Patrol personnel;

WHEREAS, our nation needs to find real solutions to our immigration issues instead of constructing a wall that would prohibit the creation of a river walk for the revitalization of downtown Brownsville and for the benefit of the citizens of both countries; and

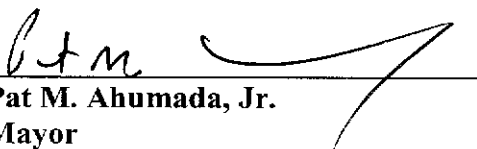
WHEREAS, construction of the border wall would adversely affect the delicate local economy, destroy vital ecosystems, cost taxpayers billions of dollars, and put at risk hundreds of lives by herding people to dangerous desert crossings

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BROWNSVILLE:


Section 1. The City Commission of the City of Brownsville, and Brownsville residents, hereby express strong opposition to the federal funding and construction of the border wall, which would be imposed upon our international border by the U.S. Federal Government, as an infrastructure project that would not meet the strategy for comprehensive immigration reform for the U.S., and cause untold damage to human life, wildlife, ecosystems, local economy, private property, historical property, farmland, and international relations between Mexico and the United States.

Section 2. The attached petition, signed by local residents, public and private entities, hereby reflects their opposition of the proposed border wall, and they join with the Texas Border Coalition and the Rio Grande Valley Network of organizations who oppose the border wall construction.

DONE this 4th day of December, 2007.


Pat M. Ahumada, Jr.
Mayor

Attest:


Estela Von Hatten
City Secretary

