

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 5, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mullin:

I write to demand immediate answers and greater transparency relating to the high-capacity groundwater wells drilled by federal border wall contractors in Luna County at the direction of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The ongoing confusion and federal overreach connected with this project make clear that DHS must do more to hear community concerns and provide answers before the project can move forward.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) recently ordered contractors to stop drilling new wells following concerns raised by my office, ranchers, and stakeholders. However, CBP's order does not undo the unauthorized drilling that has already occurred, provide clarity around whether the existing wells will continue to be pumped, or provide clarity on how much water will be needed for the broader project.

My constituents and I support securing our border. But the federal government does not get to disregard state law, threaten private property and water rights, and expect New Mexicans to accept it without protecting their land and resources. Ranchers, landowners, and local officials continue to be left in the dark while DHS contractors move forward with a project that could jeopardize scarce groundwater resources during a severe drought.

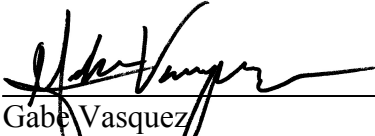
I urge DHS to hold an on-site, in-person meeting in Luna County before the project moves forward. It is critical that senior DHS and CBP officials hear directly from affected ranchers and landowners, local officials, the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, and my office.

In addition to the meeting, I am requesting a full briefing on the project and answers to the following questions on behalf of my constituents:

1. What is the justification and scope of concrete road construction along the border, and has DHS considered if there are less intrusive options that can provide adequate security along the border in this highly rural area?
2. How much total water the project will require, how much water has been pumped to date, and what additional construction is planned?
3. What changes are being made to ensure that DHS contractors will protect water and property rights, comply with state law, and continue to coordinate with local communities going forward?
4. Will CBP require contractors to properly cap all existing wells? How will CBP verify that the wells are capped and ensure contractors fulfill their commitment not to drill additional wells?
5. How does CBP plan to obtain the water needed for the remaining construction? Will any additional wells be drilled?

Securing our border cannot come at the expense of New Mexico ranchers and their livelihoods. The people of southern New Mexico should not have to fight their own federal government for basic transparency and accountability. I expect your prompt response and a commitment to meet with my constituents without delay.

Sincerely,



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress