



## **International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section**

For immediate release  
June 11, 2019

### **PRIVATE GATE CONSTRUCTED ON FEDERAL PROPERTY**

A private organization, We Build the Wall, built a gate on federal land in Sunland Park, N.M., near El Paso, Texas, without authority, and then locked the gate closed on June 6, 2019. The private gate blocks a levee road owned by the U.S. Government. After repeated requests to unlock and open the private gate, the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), accompanied by two uniformed law enforcement officers from the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Office, removed the private lock, opened the gate, and locked the gate open pending further discussions with We Build the Wall. The gate was also opened so that USIBWC employees can conduct maintenance and operations at American Dam.

The USIBWC did not authorize the construction of the private gate on federal property as announced on We Build the Wall's Twitter page. The USIBWC is not charged with securing other fences or gates as reported by We Build the Wall. The international border fences are not on USIBWC property. The USIBWC did not open any other gates in the El Paso area as erroneously reported. Other gates and the border fence are controlled by other federal agencies.

An incomplete application permit from We Build the Wall was submitted to the USIBWC on Sunday, June 2. The USIBWC responded to the initial permit request on June 6 with questions and requests for additional information. The USIBWC has not yet received a response from the private organization regarding the Agency's initial response to their permit request.

The USIBWC is concerned about the safety and security of our employees and the infrastructure at the American Dam, which is next to the privately-constructed gate. Despite USIBWC requests to locate the gate further from American Dam, the private gate was constructed in a way that may channel undocumented immigrants into the American Dam area. When the proper documentation is received for the permit, USIBWC will continue to process the permit application.

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