

PEOPLE OF LA JUNTA FOR PRESERVATION

PLJP Legal Action Helps Secure Continued Pause on Big Bend Border Construction

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — August 28, 2026 — Two weeks ago, People of La Junta for Preservation, Indigenous plaintiffs and Far Flung Outdoor Center went to federal court seeking emergency protection for the Greater Big Bend.

Within days of our filing, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Rodney Scott ordered construction activity in Big Bend National Park stopped while he traveled to the region for an on-the-ground evaluation and meetings with local stakeholders.

Today, following a hearing before U.S. District Judge Orlando L. Garcia, that protection continues.

The parties agreed that no new ground-disturbing construction activity will move forward while the federal government meets with plaintiffs and provides greater clarity about what it intends to build in the Big Bend.

For Indigenous people whose ancestors are buried throughout this landscape, every day without bulldozers moving earth matters.

We came to court because construction and ground disturbance had begun while our communities still lacked meaningful answers about what was being built, where it would be built, what sacred and archaeological places could be affected, and whether Indigenous people would continue to have access to places where we pray, gather medicines, make offerings and conduct ceremonies.

Our lawsuit helped force those questions into the open.

The government's plans have already begun changing. The 30-foot pedestrian wall once contemplated for portions of this landscape will not be built inside Big Bend National Park, and the government is now being required to explain what roads, vehicle barriers, surveillance infrastructure and other technology it still intends to place here.

That matters because our concerns have never been limited to the height of a wall. Roads, lighting, cameras, sensors, excavation and other infrastructure can still disturb ancestors, destroy archaeological resources, alter sacred landscapes and interfere with Indigenous religious practices.

Kónitsaqíí and the Greater Big Bend are not empty spaces on a federal construction map. This is an Indigenous homeland containing sacred places, ancestral burials, archaeological resources and living religious traditions that continue today.

We are grateful to Commissioner Scott for stopping the construction and coming to the region to listen. We are grateful to Judge Garcia for encouraging the parties to continue talking. And we are grateful to our attorneys, fellow plaintiffs and everyone throughout the Greater Big Bend who has refused to remain silent.

This is not the end of the fight.

But two weeks ago, bulldozers were moving.

Today, they are not.

And for our ancestors, our sacred places and the people who will inherit responsibility for this landscape after us, that matters enormously.

We will keep fighting.