

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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October 10, 2018

Paul Enriquez
U.S. Customs and Border Patrol
Real Estate and Environmental Branch
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229

Re: *Project Review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Proposed Construction of 25 Miles of Levee Wall System, Hidalgo County, and 8 Miles of Border Wall System, Starr County (CBP/106, THC #201900272)*

Mr. Enriquez:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the above-referenced project. This letter serves as comment on the proposed undertaking from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

The History Programs Division staff, led by Caitlin Brashear, has completed its review of the project, which proposes the construction of 25 miles of levee wall system on the south face of the northern U.S. International Boundary Water commission (IBWC) levee in Hidalgo County—consisting of a reinforced concrete levee wall system to the height of the existing levee topped with 18-foot tall steel bollards installed on top of the levee wall—and 8 miles, with the option of 4 additional miles, of 20- to 30-foot tall steel bollard wall system in Starr County. The levee wall system in Hidalgo County would also include a 150-foot enforcement zone on the south/river side of the levee wall, detection and surveillance technology that would be incorporated into the levee wall, automated vehicle gates, pedestrian gates, an all-weather patrol road that would run parallel to the levee wall and enforcement zone lighting. The bollard wall system in Starr County would include detection and surveillance technology that would be incorporated into the wall design, pedestrian gates, and an all-weather patrol road parallel to the wall. It could also include a 150-foot enforcement zone on the south/river side of the bollard wall as well as enforcement zone lighting. As you know, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the federal agency will ultimately be responsible for the identification and evaluation of historic properties within the project's Area of Potential Effect. Known historic resources located near the newly proposed project areas include:

Hidalgo County

- **La Lomita Historic District**, listed in the National Register in 1975 and designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1964;
- **La Lomita Chapel**, designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) in 1964;
- **Louisiana–Rio Grande Canal Company Irrigation System**, listed in the National Register in 1995;
- **Eli Jackson Cemetery**, designated as a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) in 2005;
- **Jackson Ranch Church (Methodist) Cemetery**, and the affiliated Jackson Ranch Church (chapel) which lies south of the Doffin Canal levee;
- **Rancho Toluca**, listed in the National Register in 1983 and designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1965;
- **San Juan Plantation**, designated as an RTHL in 1964; and,
- **Donna-to-Brownsville Levee**, determined eligible for listing in the National Register by the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) in 2009;

Starr County

- **Roma Historic District**, listed in the National Register in 1972, and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1972;
- **Roma City Hall**, designated as an RTHL in 1963;
- **Noah Cox House**, designated as an RTHL in 1963;
- **Old Garcia Home**, designated as an RTHL in 1964;
- **Knights of Columbus Hall**, designated as an RTHL in 1963;
- **Roma-San Pedro International Bridge**, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 and designated as a State Antiquities Landmark in 1983;
- **Fort Ringgold Historic District**, listed in the National Register in 1993;
- **Rio Grande City Downtown Historic District**, listed in the National Register in 2005;

The Archeology Division (AD) review staff, led by Casey Hanson, has examined our records and determined that most of the proposed study area has not been surveyed for cultural resources, but does contain numerous recorded archeological sites and high probability areas for cultural resources. The final, proposed APE should be surveyed by a professional archeologist. If any of the work will occur on land owned or controlled by an entity of the state, an Antiquities Permit must be secured from our office before fieldwork may begin. Please ask prospective contractors if they are qualified to receive an Antiquities Permit.

More information on the historic properties above is available on THC's Historic Sites Atlas at atlas.thc.state.tx.us. As the plans continue to develop, THC looks forward to reviewing your identification and evaluation of any other historic properties within the proposed Area of Potential Effect, and we hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. Thank you for your cooperation in this federal review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. If you have any questions concerning our review, or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Caitlin Brashear at 512-463-5851 or caitlin.brashear@thc.texas.gov.

Sincerely,



Caitlin Brashear Historian, Federal Programs
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