UPDATE: 1st section of Texas-built border wall nearly done in Starr County

STARR COUNTY, Texas (Border Report) — A segment of border wall being built by the State of Texas in rural Starr County is nearly completed but some local leaders question how effective it will be in keeping migrants from crossing illegally from Mexico.

A 1.7-mile segment of the state-funded border wall is about a tenth of a mile short of completion on state lands just west of La Grulla, Texas, Francoise Luca, communications specialist with the Texas Facilities Commission told Border Report on Monday.



An overhead drone shot from Friday, March 25, 2022, shows over 1.5 miles of border wall built by the State of Texas in rural Starr County, outside the town of La Grulla. (Photo by Texas Facilities Commission)

Video of the site recently shot by Border Report shows a significantly longer border wall than in mid-December when Texas Gov. Greg Abbott came to the region accompanied by other state leaders to show off the structure to reporters.

This first segment is among a total of 8 miles of noncontiguous border wall that Abbott says the state will fund and build in Starr County in order "to secure and safeguard the sovereignty for the United States as well as for our own state."



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott boasts Dec. 18, 2021, of the eight miles of border wall that the State of Texas plans to build in rural Starr County. (Sandra Sanchez/Border Report File Photo)

"This unprecedented action is needed for one single reason and that's because the Biden administration has

failed to do its job," Abbott said during his Dec. 18 visit.

The 8 miles are not to exceed $162 million and are being paid by taxpayer funds, as well as donated funds, according to the state's contracts.

Luca said the border wall is being built using 30-foot-tall bollards that were surplus from the federal government's border wall construction program and were sent from southern California.



The Texas Facilities Commission received 1,700 metal bollards for the border wall project in Starr County from federal surplus from the Trump-era border wall that was sent from California. This photo by TFC shows the last shipment from San Diego being loaded for Texas on Feb. 7, 2022. (Photo by TFC)

The Federal Surplus Program is offered through the General Services Administration, and goods are available to state and local municipalities that request it as long as they fund transportation costs.

In the case of the 1,700 bollards received from California, the State of Texas paid big rigs to haul the metal wall segments across the country by early February, according to the TFC.

“Those bollards were in California and shipped them into Texas so that was a cost for the project,” Luca said.



The Texas-built border wall in Starr County is 1.59 miles as of Monday, March 28, 2022, according to the Texas Facilities Commission. (Sandra Sanchez/Border Report)

The Texas Facilities Commission in June began oversight of the Texas border wall project. The commission manages most of the facilities where Texas state business is conducted. It oversees hundreds of state office buildings throughout the Lone Star State.













Photos taken by the Texas Facilities Commission on Friday, March 25, 2022, show a state-built border wall nearly completed in rural Starr County. (Photos by Texas Facilities Commission.)

But not everyone approves of the construction.

Starr County Judge Eloy Vera recently told Border Report that he believes "it's a waste of money."



Starr County Judge Eloy Vera is seen March 23, 2022, in front of the county courthouse in Rio Grande City, Texas. (Sandra Sanchez/Border Report)

Vera says he firmly supports border security initiatives but he doesn't think erecting a segment of border wall — less than 2 miles long — in a farm field set back at least a half-mile from the Rio Grande, is going to stop many migrants from crossing illegally from Mexico into the United States.

"I compare that to, let's say, the river, the Rio Grande. If I go and put two telephone poles in the middle of the river, is that going to stop the flow? No. They'll just go around it. When you do a mile or 2 miles of wall and you have 60 miles of border, they're still going to come through," Vera

told Border Report on Wednesday standing in front of the Starr County Courthouse in Rio Grande City.

When Donald Trump was president, landowners in this rural county of 65,000 located on the South Texas border between McAllen and Laredo, were repeatedly served by federal officials with court orders requesting they allow border wall construction on their riverfront property.

Now Vera says he fears the state is going to do the same.

Luca said it is possible that landowners will be asked to grant easements for some of the state-built border wall, but she said so far all of the Texas border wall is on state property.

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