



Tohono O'odham Nation
Office of the
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BORDER WALL CONSTRUCTION MUST STOP DESTROYING SACRED SITES ***Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Documents Failure to Consult on Blasting of Burial Sites***

SELLS, Ariz. – Today, Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. testified before the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the U.S. regarding the destruction being caused by construction of the border wall. Federal agencies have failed to hold required consultations with the Nation even as the construction has bulldozed or blasted religious and cultural sites of great significance to the Tohono O'odham. The Chairman's testimony and the full hearing can be viewed on the Subcommittee's web page at this link: <https://bit.ly/2PnSek0>

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. said *"No one reveres our military veterans more than the O'odham, however, dynamiting these sacred sites and burial grounds is the same as bulldozing Arlington National Cemetery or any other cemetery. Our history as a people is being obliterated and our ancestors' remains are being desecrated. Congress must act to restrict or remove DHS's dangerously broad authority to waive cultural preservation laws, and compel them to consult with tribes on these issues. Preserving these sites is important not only to the O'odham, but to the history and culture of the United States."*

The Tohono O'odham Nation is a federally-recognized tribe with more than 34,000 enrolled tribal citizens; its traditional lands range from what is now central and southern Arizona into northern Mexico. The Nation's current reservation includes 62 miles of international border, and it has been on the front lines of border policy since 1854.

Border wall construction at culturally important areas such as Quitobaquito Springs and Monument Hill has destroyed sacred sites, burial grounds, and other areas of significance to the Nation. The National Parks Service has acknowledged these areas are sacred to the Nation. Yet in the rush to build the wall, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has waived cultural preservation and environmental laws.

Federal agencies have also failed to hold any meaningful consultations with the Nation about the wall construction and its impacts, as required by law and executive orders. This is despite repeated requests by the Nation, and unfulfilled promises by DHS that such conversations would occur.

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