

US border wall threatens wildlife, lawsuit says

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A lawsuit filed by environmental groups says that further construction on the US-Mexico border wall would harm endangered species such as jaguars and wolves

Three environmental groups are suing President Donald Trump's administration to stop further construction on the southern US border

wall, arguing that it threatens endangered wildlife such as jaguars and wolves.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in US federal court in Washington by Defenders of Wildlife, Center for Biological Diversity and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Building a wall on the Mexican border was one of Trump's key campaign promises and has been one of his top government priorities.

When the US Congress failed to allocate enough funds for wall building, Trump declared a national emergency and re-allocated funds from the military.

Tuesday's lawsuit argues that environmental harm "includes construction on protected federal lands including National Forests, and adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act, as well as their designated critical habitat."

The latest construction proposal "would block critical cross-border wildlife corridors and permanently impede recovery efforts for endangered species like the Mexican gray wolf and jaguar," said Jason Rylander, senior counsel for Defenders of Wildlife.

Brian Segee, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, said that Trump is "turning the borderlands into sacrifice zones" for the sake of the wall.

About 700 miles (1,127 kilometers) of the 1,800-mile border already has some form of fencing or vehicle barriers that wildlife can pass through, according to the legal complaint.

However, "the cumulative and irreversible impact of additional border

fencing on wildlife populations becomes ever greater with each additional mile of border wall constructed," it states.

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