

Border agency authorized to clean up wall construction sites

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PHOENIX — U.S. Customs and Border Protection has been authorized to start cleaning up construction sites and close small gaps in the southern border wall nearly a year after President Joe Biden took office and ordered building to stop.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement this week that wall building projects begun by the Defense Department within the Border Patrol's sectors in California, Arizona and parts of Texas will be turned over to his agency so any safety and environmental concerns can be addressed.

Work will include installing drainage systems to prevent flooding, erosion control and slope stabilization, construction and improvement of access roads and removal of building materials that will no longer be used.

It was unclear when cleanup and any remediation work will begin.

CBP will also close any small gaps that remain open from prior construction and finish work on incomplete gates, including inoperable storm gates that need to open during the rainy season.

Mayorkas said the the Biden administration is still calling on Congress to cancel any remaining border wall funding left over from former President Donald Trump's time in office and instead fund technology and other kinds of border security measures it considers more effective.

This story has been updated to correct that the name of the agency is U.S. Customs and Border Protection, not U.S. Customs and Border Prevention.

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