



**UNITED STATES SENATE
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**Sen. Cruz Leading Bipartisan Effort to Get Texas-Mexico Border Bridges
Built**

Bicameral Delegation Letter to Secretary Blinken Urges Admin to Approve Necessary Permits

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senate Commerce Committee Ranking Member Ted Cruz (R-Texas) today led a bicameral, bipartisan coalition of federal lawmakers representing Texas border communities in sending a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken urging him to resolve delays in providing permits for key cross-border bridge projects between the United States and Mexico in Brownsville, Laredo, and Eagle Pass, Texas. Joining Sen. Cruz in sending the letter are Sen. John Cornyn, and U.S. Representatives Vicente Gonzalez (D-McAllen), Henry Cuellar (D-Laredo), Tony Gonzales (R-San Antonio), and Monica De La Cruz (R-Brownsville).

The lawmakers write that these bridge projects are economically vital to Texas:

“Infrastructure connections between Texas and Mexico play an essential part in our state’s and our nation’s economy. Mexico is one of the United States’ most important trading partners with billions of dollars exchanged in exports and imports each year. These cross-border bridges will expand such trade, creating vital jobs and economic opportunities in the Texas border region . . . Many of the affected Texas communities routinely rank as some of the lowest-income towns in the state. They stand to benefit immensely from the expanded and efficient cross-border trade and tourism that these projects will bring.”

In the letter, the bipartisan group points out that four cross-border bridge projects in Webb County, Cameron County, and Maverick County, Texas are being delayed because the State Department, contrary to past practice, will not give its recommendation to the president about whether to approve the permits until applicants complete a lengthy and costly environmental assessment, which makes project planning and financing significantly more difficult.

“Early in this administration, three project sponsors submitted applications for proposed bridges in Webb County and Cameron County, Texas. A fourth project in Maverick County, Texas is expected to be filed soon. In August 2022—well beyond the 60-day requirement for the State Department to make a recommendation to the president—applicants received a letter from the State Department demanding full and final environmental assessment reviews before the State Department would make its recommendation to the president for his consideration. A completed environmental assessment is unnecessary and contradicts past precedent. We urge you to ask the White House to instead restore the past practice of issuing presidential permits contingent on an environmental assessment being successfully completed.

“As you are aware, the State Department must provide its recommendation to the president about whether granting a permit for an international crossing is in the foreign policy interest of the United States. Permits for Texas-Mexico bridge projects, however, have been needlessly delayed because the State Department, after consultation with White House staff at the National Security Council and the Council on Environmental Quality, has told project sponsors that they must first complete a lengthy environmental assessment before a recommendation will be given. This additional bureaucratic hurdle should be eliminated because it is both unnecessary and ignores the positive cultural and economic impacts that make these projects in our foreign policy interest.”

Sen. Cruz and his congressional colleagues are calling on the State Department to recommend to the president that he approve the permits for these four key cross-border bridge projects in Texas. They note that the president’s approvals could be conditioned on the bridge project sponsors completing environmental and all other permitting requirements prior to construction, consistent with how recent permits for cross-border bridge projects in Pharr and Laredo, Texas were approved.

Read the full text of the letter [HERE](#).

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