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Re: Solicitation Numbers: 2017-DHS-OCPO-RFI-0001, 2017-JC-RT-0001, HSBP1017R0022

To Whom it may Concern,

Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility is an organization founded in 1981 dedicated to peace, environmental protection, and socially responsible development. We are past winners of the American Institute of Architects Collaborative Achievement Award and a voice of conscience within our field. We speak for over 750 members from across the design professions. Our message is simple: as architects, designers, and planners we reject your border wall. The project envisioned in these solicitations should not be built. It is wasteful, damaging, unethical, and mean-spirited. These design solicitations must be terminated and your department must refocus your efforts on projects that will enhance our country, not hurt it.

As you can see from the design projects submitted by ADPSR members to the solicitations listed above, there are plenty of alternatives that could make better use of the financial resources and professional talent you are seeking to deploy for this project. We offer you the true strength of American architecture, design, and planning: not our fear of and hostility towards others, but our courage, humor, intelligence, compassion, and generosity. Rather than further isolating already marginalized communities, we call on your department to widely distribute design solutions that address the real needs of all stakeholders of the border region with resilient strategies of interdependence.

Our professions are committed to protecting public health, safety, and welfare, so we are fundamentally at odds with this project that intends to divide, demean, and injure people on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Our objections are:

1. This is a project that kills. There are already frequent deaths of would-be migrants in the deserts of the border area. This proposed wall, by making the border even more inaccessible, will increase the number of deaths: an outcome that is completely unacceptable and flies in the face of professional ethics and human rights. Architects and planners can not ethically undertake projects that will kill people, nor should your department seek to cause death or to suborn designers into unethical practice.
2. This project will undermine peaceful international relations between the United States and Mexico. As demonstrated by some of the design features requested in the RFPs (e.g. "aesthetically pleasing" treatment on the North side only) this project embodies a profound mistrust and aversion towards Mexico; a country with which the United States has traditionally had extremely important

trade, cultural, and interpersonal relations. Much of the political campaign rhetoric leading up to this RFP painted a harshly negative picture of Mexicans that was seen by the majority of Americans, and the rest of the world, as frankly racist. This project clearly builds on that view. We reject your hostile gesture towards Mexico.

3. This project will damage the ecology of our border region. The line this wall will be built on is the result of politics; it is not aligned with an ecological or natural border. This wall will divide and damage regional ecosystems, including habitat for many endangered species, and disrupt watershed flows and animal migration routes. The deserts of central North America are delicate ecologies that are increasingly stressed by a changing climate; this project will only exacerbate regional decline.

4. This wall will also harm the human communities that seek to live in the border region. Recent polling suggests that residents on both the US and the Mexican side of the border region overwhelmingly oppose this project. This wall will cause economic harm to residents of sister cities on both sides of the border who are economically and socially dependant on one another.

5. This project is completely unnecessary and hugely wasteful. The motivation for this project -- the idea that people from Mexico and Central America crossing remote borders on foot pose a significant public safety threat or are stealing American jobs -- is not founded in fact. Most undocumented people in this country arrived long ago or have entered legally and overstayed their visas. And the U.S.-Mexico border is already colossally overbuilt and over-surveilled. The contractors supplying the current services don't need more government largesse, they need to be reined in and reviewed for their political donations.

The billions of dollars proposed for this project must instead be used to sustain the infrastructure truly essential to American homeland security that has been neglected for far too long, from dangerously unreinforced dams and bridges to addressing the pressing concerns of climate change on coastal cities and the housing crisis sweeping much of our nation.

For the record, the members of ADPSR and our colleagues do not offer our services to build your project of hatred, racism, violence, and waste. We demand investment for the public good instead.

Sincerely yours,



Raphael Sperry, President



Lynne Elizabeth



Franziska Amacher, FAIA



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Mary Ann Gallagher



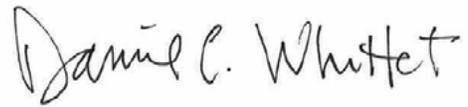
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