



## **Bill Summary: Border Visibility and Security Act**

The Border Visibility and Security Act, or [H.R. 1707](#), is designed to improve border security along the U.S.-Mexico border. The bill would install improved border surveillance and detection technology, eradicate the growth of invasive plant species that block the view of border agents, and construct navigable roads along the border.

The Border Visibility and Security Act was introduced in the House on March 9, 2021 by Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas). The bill has 21 cosponsors, including Representative Henry Cuellar (D-Texas).

### ***Background***

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers face numerous obstacles in their efforts to secure the southwest border, with different border sectors posing unique challenges. Along the Rio Grande river, 60,000 acres of invasive [Carrizo cane](#) blocks the view of border agents attempting to secure the area. Carrizo cane and salt cedar can reach heights of over 25-feet, making it easier for irregular migrants and drug traffickers to pass through undetected. The non-native plant is also an obstacle for first responders needing to provide time-sensitive emergency response to migrants who may be in need of medical attention.

In other border regions, CBP has insufficient security technology to achieve full operational control of the border. According to a February 2021 report, CBP has [implemented](#) just 28% of planned surveillance and subterranean technology solutions. In still other areas, a key concern is inadequate infrastructure, including roads, which hinders deployment of security personnel and vehicles. With parts of the border region hidden or inaccessible, it is difficult for CBP to fully secure the border.

### ***The Border Visibility and Security Act would:***

- **Strengthen the requirements for border security technology along the southern border.** The bill would require the deployment of “the most practical and effective technology available” for achieving situational awareness and operational control of the border. This includes radar surveillance systems, unmanned cameras, sensors, Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radars (VADER) and 3-dimensional, seismic acoustic detection and ranging border tunneling detection technology.
- **Require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to eradicate Carrizo cane along the Rio Grande River.** The bill calls for the DHS to work in cooperation with appropriate Federal and State agencies to permanently eradicate Carrizo cane growing along the Rio Grande River.
- **Require DHS to construct at least 700 miles of navigable roads along the southwest border.** Prior to construction, DHS would further be to identify where the road would most effectively increase operational control of the southwest border.

- **Require DHS to submit a southern border strategy to relevant congressional committees.** The comprehensive strategy would include a list of physical barriers, technologies and tools that can be used to achieve situational awareness and operational control along the border. The list would include a projected per mile cost estimate and a detailed rationale for why each physical barrier, technology, tool, or other device was chosen.
- **Fund these measures through the use of [forefeited criminal proceeds](#) from drug cartels.** The bill lists profits forfeited to the U.S. as a result of the criminal conviction of Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman as well as other convicted drug cartel members.

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