



Aubrey Dunn, State Land Commissioner
State of New Mexico

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Dunn Cancels Border Wall Parcel Auction

SANTA FE, NM – State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn today announced his decision to cancel the Dec. 3 sale/auction of State Trust Lands along the U.S./Mexico border in Doña Ana County.

Commissioner Dunn opted to cancel the sale in order to defer the matter to incoming Commissioner of Public Lands.

“I believe that it’s in the best interest of the Trust to defer action on this trespass until the new Land Commissioner has taken office,” Commissioner Dunn said.

Dunn said despite the decision to terminate the sale, he remains extremely concerned about the blatant trespass and the illegal construction on State Trust Lands, and how it impacts the agency, its lands and its income.

“It is unfortunate that we’re having to wrangle with the federal government who continue to trespass on State Trust Lands,” Commissioner Dunn said. “We tried to resolve this matter in an equitable manner but U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) valuation of the affected land was well below the threshold of what constitutes a reasonable offer.”

In August, CBP offered to settle the trespass by purchasing the 7.28 acre tract for \$8,736 – less than half the amount SLO would collect for an identical 60-foot road and access easement for the same acreage over the course of a 35-year lease (\$19,200). A 99-year lease agreement would generate more than \$54,000.

Oil, gas, and mineral production, ranching and farming, and commercial development on State Trust Lands support public schools, seven universities, New Mexico Military Institute, New Mexico School for the Deaf, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, three hospitals, correctional facilities, water conservation projects, and public building construction and repair. In fiscal year 2017, the State Land Office collected \$664 million from lease payments, oil and gas lease sale earnings, rights-of-way, permits, interest, fees, and oil, gas, and mineral royalties.