



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

October 26, 2026

Major General Thomas Suelzer
Texas Adjutant General
Camp Mabry, Building 1
2200 West 35th Street
Austin, TX 78703

RE: Authorization for Texas Military Department to Access State-Owned Rio Grande Islands

Dear Major General Thomas Suelzer:

As Texas Land Commissioner, I am committed to protecting Texas state land along our southern border and working with our state and federal partners to support lawful border security operations.

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) received a request from U.S. Customs and Border Protection regarding 28 islands within the Rio Grande that were previously considered unclaimed or whose ownership had not been established. Following our review of historical records, surveys, and other relevant information, the GLO has determined that nine of the islands are owned by the State of Texas.

As such, the Texas Military Department (TMD) may access these state-owned islands for the purpose of maintaining operational security of our southern border.

Specifically, we welcome TMD's coordination with the GLO and other authorized law enforcement partners regarding access and other appropriate activities that support border security and help prevent these properties from being used for criminal activity. All operations must be conducted in accordance with any applicable state and federal laws.

This effort builds on my work to establish ownership of Rio Grande islands and ensure law enforcement can access state-owned property. While we have not confirmed criminal activity on these additional islands, past experience has shown how border islands can be exploited by cartels and smugglers. In 2023, I declared Fronton Island, a 170-acre island in Starr County, state land. Following that declaration, Department of Public Safety and TMD cleared vegetation through Operation Flat Top, helping disrupt criminal activity at the site.

The GLO will coordinate with TMD to identify the specific islands covered by this determination, provide available mapping information, and discuss access and operational requirements.

The State of Texas has a responsibility to protect its property. I appreciate TMD's continued work to safeguard Texas communities and look forward to coordinating on appropriate measures to protect these state-owned islands.

For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Buckingham", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

Enclosure

c: Scott MacNaughton, Office of the Governor
Paul Enriquez, U.S. Customs and Border Protection



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

October 26, 2026

Colonel Freeman F. Martin
Texas Department of Public Safety
5805 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX 78752-4431

RE: Authorization for Texas Department of Public Safety to Access State-Owned Rio Grande Islands

Dear Colonel Martin:

As Texas Land Commissioner, I am committed to protecting Texas state land along our southern border and coordinating with our law enforcement partners to prevent state property from being exploited for criminal activity.

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) received a request from U.S. Customs and Border Protection regarding 28 islands within the Rio Grande whose ownership had not been definitively established. Following our review of historical records, surveys, and other relevant information, the GLO has determined that nine of the islands are owned by the State of Texas.

As such, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) may access these state-owned islands for the purpose of maintaining operational security of our southern border.

This effort builds on the GLO's previous successful partnership of establishing ownership of certain other Rio Grande islands to ensure law enforcement can access state-owned property. While we have not been alerted to criminal activity on these additional nine islands, previous experience has demonstrated the exploitation of border islands by cartels and smugglers. In 2023, I declared Fronton Island, a 170-acre island in Starr County, to be a state-owned island. Following that declaration, DPS and the Texas Military Department cleared vegetation through *Operation Flat Top*, helping disrupt criminal activity at the site.

We invite DPS to coordinate with the GLO and our federal and state partners regarding patrols, monitoring, and any other law enforcement activities within DPS's authority, in accordance

with any applicable state and federal laws. Furthermore, the GLO will provide all available maps and necessary information to ensure DPS has the most accurate information to carry out security operations.

The State of Texas has a responsibility to protect its property. I appreciate DPS's continued work to safeguard Texas communities and look forward to continuing our partnership to protect these state-owned islands.

For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Buckingham", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

Enclosure

c: Scott MacNaughton, Office of the Governor
Paul Enriquez, U.S. Customs and Border Protection

TEXAS

Rio Grande



Nixon Island
21.7 Acres



La Bota Island
2.9 Acres



Tex Mex Island 2
1.5 Acres



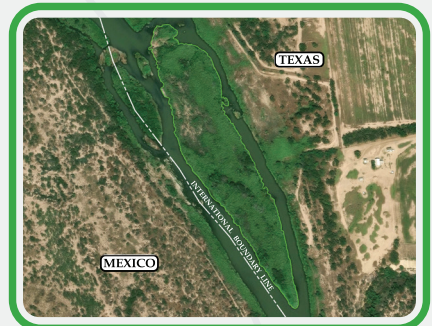
Zachary Island
12.5 Acres



McKendricks Island
18.4 Acres



Clark Island
3.6 Acres



Zachary Island
12.5 Acres



Miller Island 2
4.5 Acres

Miller Island
0.5 Acres



MEXICO



Texas General Land Office
Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D.

