

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2010

Dear Colleague,

Despite significant investments in personnel and infrastructure, large gaps remain along our nation's borders. The current wave of violent crimes on federal lands along the border makes this problem more apparent with each passing day. Department of the Interior and Forest Service lands have become havens for criminals and targeted points for illegal entry into the U.S. by drug cartels and human traffickers. Along with this flow of drugs and criminals comes significant environmental damage to National Parks and Wilderness Areas on the border. Tragically, it is the inflexible enforcement of environmental policies by our land managing agencies that closes off these lands to effective Border Patrol operations. As a result, far more environmental damage is being done to these lands than could ever result from border protection.

Through internal Department of the Interior documents we obtained and discussions with on-the-ground professionals, we have learned that many of our border problems are self-inflicted. The Border Patrol is routinely second-guessed and hamstrung in both operations and placement of security infrastructure by federal land managers from the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture.

Last month, Rob Krentz was murdered on his ranch outside of Douglas, Arizona near the border with Mexico. We have learned that his murderer chose to exploit vulnerabilities on federal land to traverse in and out of the United States. It is no coincidence that at this same location, the Border Patrol access has been limited by land managers who have literally locked out Border Patrol vehicles.

To correct this problem, we have introduced H.R. 5016 to prohibit the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture from impeding, prohibiting, or restricting the Border Patrol from pursuing its congressionally mandated mission to achieve operational control over our borders. This legislation makes clear that the security of this nation is our top priority and that we will not allow federal agencies to wage turf wars at the expense of our security.

We strongly urge you to join with us and the union that represents our nation's Border Patrol officers, the National Border Patrol Council, in supporting H.R. 5016. If interested in cosponsoring the bill, please contact Cody Stewart with Congressman Bishop's staff at cody.stewart@mail.house.gov or at 5-8411.

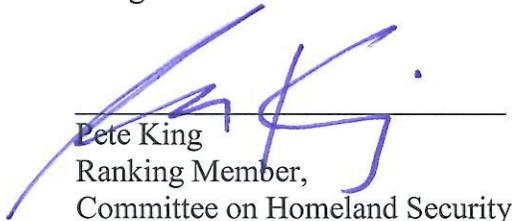
Sincerely,



Rob Bishop
Chairman,
Congressional Western Caucus



Doc Hastings
Ranking Member,
Committee on Natural Resources



Pete King
Ranking Member,
Committee on Homeland Security



Lamar Smith
Ranking Member,
Committee on Judiciary