

## **\*Diverse Coalition Against The Border Bill\***

**Dear Representative,**

The House is poised to consider the “Conservation and Economic Growth Act”, which includes the title, the “National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act.” The undersigned organizations are strongly opposed to that provision and to the entire bill.

”The National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act” and its backers are pushing a new over-reaching and extreme effort to create a 100 mile zone on the Mexican and Canadian borders that would sacrifice the rights of Americans to use their land and flout the environmental laws that protect it, all to advance an anti-immigrant, anti-privacy and anti-regulatory agenda.

Proponents of the bill are taking the extraordinary step of handing over a 100 mile “operational control zone”, home to millions of Americans, to the federal government, saying that dozens of environmental, safety and religious freedom laws no longer apply. And it would do nothing to advance a comprehensive solution to America’s immigration challenges while authorizing new surveillance of ordinary Americans.

"Security and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. We need both," said Congressman Silvestre Reyes (D-TX) about the bill. “Having served as an agent and Sector Chief of the U.S. Border Protection for 26 1/2 years prior to coming to Congress, I understand the challenges and realities of securing the border. We have a responsibility to make sure security policies encourage cooperation and dialogue and should hold the line against politically motivated efforts to weaken environmental protections under the guise of enhancing security."

Echoing that sentiment, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection issued an official statement opposing ”The National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act”, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, has said, “It is unnecessary, and a bad policy.” Yet supporters of this provision continue to push the bill to satisfy the most extreme anti-immigrant and anti-environment factions of the population.

Latino and immigration reform groups recognize this attack as an exploitation of anti-immigration sentiments to further erode the environmental protections enjoyed by all Americans on the northern and southern borders. Native American Tribes view the bill as a direct and profound threat to tribal sovereignty, including protection of sacred places and cultural artifacts. Ranchers, business owners, hunters and conservation groups don’t want the bill, and environmentalists see the bill as an overwhelming threat to air, water, and wildlife.

We must respect the liberty of Americans to access our land and protect their right to breathe clean air and drink clean water, and to preserve our special places and wildlife for future generations. This bill represents none of those values. For those reasons, we ask that you support the Grijalva amendment to strike “The National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act” and oppose final passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

League of Conservation Voters

Hispanic Federation

The Wilderness Society

Labor Council for Latin American  
Advancement

National Latino Coalition on Climate  
Change

American Civil Liberties Union

National Council of La Raza

Texas Border Coalition

Earthjustice

United States-Mexico Chamber of  
Commerce

National Hispanic Environmental Council

League of United Latin American Citizens

The Sierra Club

National Association of Hispanic Federal  
Executives

Voces Verdes

National Association of Hispanic  
Publications

Hispanic National Bar Association

National Association of Hispanic Federal  
Executives

Natural Resources Defense Council

Escondido Human Rights Committee

San Diego Foundation for Change

National Parks Conservation Association

U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute

SER-Jobs for Progress National

Hispanic Association of Colleges and  
Universities

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

Defenders of Wildlife

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Association of Latin American and  
Caribbean Communities

Center for Biological Diversity

National Institute for Latino Policy

Equality Alliance of San Diego County

Southern Border Communities Coalition

BorderLinks

National Conference of Puerto Rican  
Women

Northern Alaska Environmental Center

Cochise County Chapter Progressive  
Democrats of America

Tucson Samaritans

Green Valley Samaritans

National Hispanic Coalition on Aging

Alaska Wilderness League

Southwest Voter Registration and Education  
Project

No More Deaths – Tucson

Hispanic Access Foundation

Western Environmental Law Center

Citizens for Border Solutions

Southern Border Communities Coalition,  
Arizona Chapter

School Sisters of Notre Dame, Douglas, AZ

Citizens for a Safe and Secure Border

Klamath Forest Alliance

Latino and Latina Roundtable of the San  
Gabriel and Pomona Valley