

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 7, 2012
[PERMALINK](#)

CONTACT: [Crystal Feldman](#), [Spencer Pederson](#) or [Jill Strait](#)
202-226-9019

House Approves Bishop Amendment to End DHS Extortion Payments, Redirect Funds to Border Protection

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House of Representatives last night passed, in a bipartisan vote of 230-186, National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Chairman Rob Bishop's (UT-01) Border Patrol Operations Enhancement Amendment to the FY 2013 Homeland Security Appropriations Act. The amendment eliminates mitigation payments from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for purported "environmental damage" stemming from the U.S. Border Patrol simply doing its job to protect and secure public lands along the U.S. border. It redirects \$3 million initially earmarked for mitigation to more legitimate and deserving border protection activities, allowing the Border Patrol to focus its resources on its core mission of preventing illegal border crossings and protecting the homeland.

"Cartel operations that smuggle drugs and humans into the U.S. through our federal lands are the leading cause of environmental damage. The damage is not coming from the U.S. Border Patrol," said Subcommittee Chairman Bishop. "The U.S. Border Patrol needs every available resource to fulfill its core mission to protect Americans and prevent dangerous drug traffickers and human smugglers from entering the U.S. Each dollar appropriated must be spent wisely. Supplementing other federal agency budgets is not part of this mission and these funds are better spent on securing our country."

There are serious security gaps on federal lands along the U.S. border where the DOI and the U.S. Forest Service have actively blocked the Border Patrol's access. As a result, federal lands along the border are specifically targeted by criminals, drug smugglers, human traffickers and potentially even terrorists because they are remote, uninhabited and less frequently patrolled by Border Patrol agents.

Not only is DOI blocking efforts to secure the border, but it is charging DHS millions of dollars for conducting border patrol operations on its land. Since 2007, DHS has paid DOI over \$9 million for "environmental mitigation." This extortion is taking valuable money away from Border Patrol that is needed to safeguard our nation and ignores the fact that the majority of environmental damage is caused by illegal border crossers.

The House Natural Resources Committee has passed legislation by Subcommittee Chairman Bishop, [H.R. 1505](#) the *National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act*, to enhance border security on federal lands. H.R. 1505 would ensure that Border Patrol has access to federal lands along the border and are not prohibited from doing their job due to bureaucratic red tape.

###

<http://naturalresources.house.gov>
[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#)