



National Border Patrol Council

May 20, 2015

The Honorable Steve Pearce
U.S. House of Representatives
2432 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Pearce,

I am writing to express support for your bill to clarify the access of the U.S. Border Patrol to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument area.

As I testified on behalf of the National Border Patrol Council in 2014, two things need to be in place for border security. The first is sufficient manpower in the way of trained Border Patrol Agents in a given area of operation. The second is the ability to deploy a full suite of border security technology. This includes seismic sensors, cameras, communication equipment, fencing and even aircraft. Currently, about 40 percent of the 1,900 mile southwest border is owned by the federal government. Border Patrol Agents need access to the land to track and find illegal aliens and narcotics smugglers. However, our ability to access federal lands has been varied and the level of cooperation we receive from the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture has been dependent on the attitude and resources of individual land managers.

The National Border Patrol Council recognizes that all federal agencies must work together to enforce environmental regulations. However, there must be a careful balance between border security and environmental protection. Even after the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2006 between the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, the Interior and Homeland Security which improved access and cooperation, the Government Accountability Office still found in 2011 that about half of Border Patrol stations assigned to patrol federal lands experienced access delays.

Therefore, the National Border Patrol Council supports efforts like your Bill to clarify that our agents have the unfettered access required to do our jobs in federally controlled areas like the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Monument area.

I appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to continuing to work with you as you move this legislation through Congress. Thank you for your efforts and for considering our comments.

With kindest regard I am,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BJ", is written over a horizontal line.

Brandon Judd
President
National Border Patrol Council