



September 23, 2009

United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the many thousands of American families we represent, I urge you to **support Senator Tom Coburn's (R-OK) Secure Our Borders and Protect the Environment amendment (#2523)** to the Interior Appropriations bill, H.R. 2996, currently being debated on the Senate floor.

The **Coburn amendment** would simply prevent any funds in this bill from going to any Department of the Interior efforts or activities to impede or stall the Department of Homeland Security's progress of the border fence or to prevent the enforcement of U.S. law on public lands near the border. Yesterday, the House passed a motion to recommit to the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area Act (H.R. 324) by a vote of 259 to 167 that included this same amendment language.

In 2006, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly passed the Secure Fence Act of 2006 by a vote of 80 to 19 to construct 700 miles of border fence between the U.S. and Mexico—even then-Senator, President Barack Obama, voted in favor of the fence. Despite the enactment of this law and billions of taxpayer dollars for law enforcement efforts, our border remains vulnerable and the increase in violence in Mexico has begun to spill over into the United States. Even worse, our national parks and other federal public lands are being easily targeted by and used as sanctuaries for illegal drug smugglers because environmental concerns limit the range of U.S. Border Patrol agents and also complicate efforts to build the barrier ordered by Congress.

Not only do these restrictions on enforcement endanger our border guards, but the increased illegal activity as a result of reduced law enforcement has led to adverse environmental impacts on these lands, including contamination of pristine areas with bio-hazardous waste and communicable diseases, contamination of water supplies for animals and local ranchers, and an increase in wildfires.

We need the Coburn amendment because it is a common-sense step in our fight against the illegal drug and human trade, to secure our border, and to restore our wilderness areas that border Mexico. **I urge you to vote in favor of the Coburn amendment when it comes up for a floor vote today. Eagle Forum will score this vote**, which will appear in our scoreboard, published annually, for the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bibby  
Legislative Director, *Eagle Forum*