

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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Republicans Request Full Committee Hearing on Dangerous Federal Lands Near Southern Border

“There is simply no excuse for allowing government policies to continue that hamper the Border Patrol and create paths of access to violent criminal activity.”

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, all 20 Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee sent a letter to Chairman Nick Rahall (D-WV) highlighting the recent violence and increase of criminal activities on public lands near the U.S.-Mexico border. The letter cites many media accounts of violence, crime and other illegal activities and asks for a Full Committee hearing to examine potential causes and solutions to the serious issue. [Click here](#) to read the entire letter.

Letter excerpts:

“Drug smuggling, murders, human trafficking and other illegal activities have become prevalent on America’s public lands, including National Parks, National Forests, Wildlife Refuges, and other protected areas near our Southern border. In June, the Washington Post reported that since 2006 over 23,000 people have been killed due to drug violence in Mexico—violence that is spilling into, and through, our federal lands.”

“As the Committee of jurisdiction over the majority of our federal lands and considering the gravity of the current situation, we believe it is this Committee’s duty to act to ensure that both public safety and environmental protection are achieved on public lands by taking the steps necessary to fully secure the border against cartels and criminals. The American people deserve straight answers from the agencies responsible for protecting our borders and public lands. There is simply no excuse for allowing government policies to continue that hamper the Border Patrol and create paths of access to violent criminal activity. This situation is what led Republicans to introduce a legislative solution (H.R. 5016) that very simply ensures the Border Patrol has the authority to achieve operational control of the border on public lands.”

“In addition to calling both Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano before the Committee, we request that a hearing include witnesses from the relevant agencies, including the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. State and local law enforcement should also be included.”

Resources Republicans, led by Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

Ranking Member Rob Bishop (UT-1), have aggressively pursued the dangerous situations on our porous federal lands near the borders. In April, Rep. Bishop introduced [H.R. 5016](#) to ensure that the Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture do not restrict or impede Border Patrol from having operational control of the border. Bishop was joined in introducing the legislation by Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-01), Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Peter King (NY-03), and Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith (TX-21).

For more information on this vital national security issue click [here](#) or watch a [short video](#) produced by Natural Resource Committee Republicans.

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