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Border Patrol Agent Union Strongly Supports Bill to Improve Border Security on Public Lands

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"Bureaucratic regulations that prevent Border Patrol agents from utilizing vehicles and technology on public lands should be the least of their concerns, but unfortunately are not."

WASHINGTON D.C. – The National Border Patrol Council (NBPC), a professional union representing more than 17,000 Border Patrol Agents and support staff, sent a <u>letter</u> yesterday in support of <u>H.R. 5016</u>, a bill to prevent the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture from implementing policies that <u>restrict or impede</u> Border Patrol from carrying out their mission to secure the U.S. border on public lands. The bill is sponsored by House National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Ranking Member Rob Bishop (R-UT), House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (R-WA), Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Peter King (R-NY) and Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith (R-TX).

The need for this legislation has recently been highlighted by the <u>tragic murder</u> of Arizona rancher Robert Krentz and the <u>non-fatal shooting</u> of Arizona's Pinal County Sheriff Deputy Louie Puroll. The suspects in both incidents are believed to have entered the U.S. on federal lands near the border.

The President of the NBPC, T.J. Bonner wrote the following in support of the legislation:

"Achieving the elusive goal of securing our Nation's borders is complicated by numerous obstacles, including rugged, terrain, extreme climatic conditions, an overwhelming amount of illegal traffic, and escalation violence perpetrated by smugglers and other criminals. Bureaucratic regulations that prevent Border Patrol agents from utilizing vehicles and technology on public lands should be the least of their concerns, but unfortunately are not.

"The dedicated men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol therefore greatly appreciate H.R. 5016, which would preclude the Secretary of the Department of Interior and/or the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture from impeding, prohibiting, or restricting activities of the Secretary of Homeland Security on public lands to achieve operational control of the border."

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