



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

September 20, 2006

The Honorable David Dreier
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dreier,

I am writing to express my strong endorsement for the Border Tunnels Prevention Act (H.R. 4830). This legislation is a timely solution that will close loopholes in federal law by setting new federal criminal penalties for the building of border tunnels, which can be used by human traffickers, terrorists, and drug and weapons smugglers. I am pleased these provisions have already been included in the Senate's version of the FY 2007 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. I urge Congress to pass this legislation this year.

Border tunnels pose a serious threat to the security of our nation and to the residents and communities on both sides of the US-Mexico border. It is troubling that 40 such tunnels and passages have now been discovered since 2001, with most of them in California. Just this week a new tunnel was discovered in Calexico, California. Absent this legislation, there is no effective penalty or enforcement mechanism to bring to justice those people who build, use or finance the construction of these tunnels.

As you well know, immigration reform and border security are critical to public safety and in helping to ensure California's continued economic prosperity. Eradicating underground tunnels can help stop the abuse of human trafficking victims and reduce the flow of illegal drugs into our country. The United States and Mexico need swift and certain federal penalties as one means to deter further illegal activity of this kind. In addition to the new federal criminal penalties you propose, I urge Congress to devote the resources necessary to detain, prosecute and incarcerate individuals who engage in human trafficking and drug smuggling.



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September 20, 2006
Page two

When I met with President Vicente Fox in Sacramento to discuss important California-Mexico bilateral issues, I told him of my deep concerns on this issue and how the growing evidence of illegal border tunnels and passages undermined our shared goals for the border region. I asked President Fox to work with the Mexican Congress to adopt legislation similar to yours and to devote the law enforcement and prosecutorial resources necessary to help us combat these criminal activities. I repeated this message at the recent meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Border Governors Conference. By working together, our governments can send a very strong message on this critical matter.

Your leadership on this issue is crucially important to California and Mexico. Given the clear need, I urge Congress to pass the Border Tunnels Prevention Act this year.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger

cc: California Congressional Delegation