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COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 19, 2013

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Price,

I am writing to express strong support for Operation Stonegarden, currently funded under the State Homeland Security Grant Program. Specifically, I request a dedicated appropriation to this program of at least \$50 million, the same amount as appropriated in fiscal year 2012, to help our local law enforcement protect our borders.

Operation Stonegarden funds are critical to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies as they partner with federal officials to jointly secure U.S. borders and territories, including efforts to combat drug smuggling, human trafficking, and other border concerns. This funding enhance these entities' capabilities by providing support for additional law enforcement personnel, overtime pay, and travel and lodging for deployment of state and local personnel to further increase our presence along the borders.

This is particularly important in my district along the Central Coast of California where we have seen an increase in small-craft smuggling of narcotics and, in some cases human, using traditional Mexican fishing boats called "pangas." Local law enforcement officials estimate that each boat carries at least 1 ton of illegal drugs, usually marijuana although methamphetamine smuggling has also been reported. In addition, undocumented immigrants have been smuggled on these boats. These individuals who have come from as far as China are a border security risk, but could also be victims of human trafficking. Homeland Security personnel note that between FY11 and FY12, they have intercepted 500% more marijuana smuggled via water passage off the southern and central coast of California.

Thank you for all you do to protect the citizens of the United States. I stand ready to work with you to ensure that we are doing all we can to keep our citizens and our coastline safe. Operation Stonegarden funds are a critical to provide efficient border security and encourage cooperation between federal, state, and local law enforcement. Your strong support of this program will strengthen these links and help secure our borders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lois Capps".

LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress

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