



**DAVID PORTER**  
TEXAS RAILROAD COMMISSIONER

November 16, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary, U.S. Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Secretary Johnson,

In light of the tragedy in Paris, I feel compelled to [reiterate](#) concerns I have vocalized about the security of our energy industry –the backbone of our state and national economies – and more importantly, about the safety and well-being of Texans.

As I [reported last year](#), the failure of the federal government to secure the U.S. border has endangered Texas' critical energy infrastructure. More than 425,000 miles of pipeline are in place to carry our state's oil and gas to market, and a significant portion of this infrastructure is in the Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas, which remains vulnerable due to its proximity to the unsecured border.

Recent history shows us that ISIS attacks against oil and gas pipelines and facilities are a modus operandi that they may use against one of Texas' most abundant and valuable economic resources. Less than five months ago, [ISIS conducted a coordinated attack on three continents](#), which included a natural gas plant in France that also left [one employee decapitated](#). Other stories include reports from Egypt where [radicals](#) attacked their own country's energy infrastructure to destabilize the government. Furthermore, Yemeni terrorists attacked major oil pipelines as a tactic in their war against the West. [The Yemeni oil minister](#) said that these attacks cost their country nearly \$1 billion in lost revenue in 2012.

I shudder to think what these terrorists would do to the U.S. when they are willing to launch these kinds of attacks against their own countries. Given the fact that Texas accounts for nearly 40% of U.S. crude oil and almost 30% of our country's natural gas, events like this could have a potentially devastating impact on our state and national economies.

Mr. Secretary, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) is charged with regulating our state's energy industry, which includes conducting safety inspections on oil and gas facilities and infrastructure. Because of the drilling activity in the Eagle Ford Shale formation in South Texas, thousands of miles of pipeline and countless processing facilities have been built over the last several years. While I understand that Homeland Security does work with the oil and gas industry to ensure the security of a few large processing and refining facilities in Texas, the large majority of the thousands of miles of pipeline and facilities in South Texas remains unsecured.

The unsecured border not only threatens Texans, but also our national security and our strategic oil and gas infrastructure. A report that originated from within the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reveals that a significant number of OTM's are taking advantage of a recent flood of illegal aliens in Texas and as a result, occupying the attention of your agents. These illegal aliens are not just known to be from the Mexican drug cartels but also from nations that sponsor terrorism, as stated in this 2014 report:

“Twenty-eight individuals from Pakistan were caught attempting to sneak into the U.S. this year alone, with another 211 individuals either turning themselves in or being caught at official ports of entry. Thirteen Egyptians were caught trying to sneak into the U.S. this year alone, with another 168 either turning themselves in or being caught at official ports of entry. Four individuals from Yemen were caught attempting to sneak into the U.S. by Border Patrol agents in 2014 alone, with another 34 individuals either turning themselves in or being caught attempting to sneak through official ports of entry.”

(Source: [Brietbart, 2014](#))

While industry and law enforcement agencies have done an amazing job at stepping up their own local security efforts, the responsibility to secure our border should lie squarely with the Department of Homeland Security.

The Railroad Commission's mission is “to serve Texas by our stewardship of natural resources and the environment, *our concern for personal and community safety*, and our support of enhanced development and economic vitality for the benefit of Texans.” In light of these facts, I would encourage you to pressure the White House and instruct Customs and Border Protection to take these concerns seriously, instead of waiting until it is too late. My office is at your disposal to provide advice and counsel, so we can take this issue head on, and ensure that our people and infrastructure are protected from any and all nefarious groups.

I look forward to your prompt response as we work together to develop a solution to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Porter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'P'.

David Porter  
Texas Railroad Commission, Chairman