



DAVID PORTER
TEXAS RAILROAD COMMISSIONER

August 22, 2014

R. Gil Kerlikowske
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Commissioner Kerlikowske,

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) is charged with regulating the state's oil and gas industry, which includes conducting safety inspections on oil and gas pipelines. Because of the flurry of drilling activity in the Eagle Ford Shale formation in South Texas, thousands of miles of pipeline have been built over the last several years. Due to this, it is necessary to clear large areas of brush to build and operate a pipeline, and it has come to my attention that many of these necessary projects have resulted in providing a corridor to dangerous Mexican drug cartels.

In fact, one of your Border Patrol agents, [Robert Fuentes, characterized](#) the pipeline routes as a smuggler's paradise in a recent Bloomberg interview saying, "With oil explorers expected to drill tens of thousands of wells in the Eagle Ford over the next decade, smugglers' travel options will only increase." Combine this information with reports coming from a former [CIA operations officer](#) confirming ongoing conversations between ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Mexican drug cartels looking to exploit the southern border, and we have a very serious situation on our hands.

There are numerous tragic and gruesome reports of Mexican drug cartels using pipeline rights-of-ways to transport narcotics and illegal aliens. Many of these reports specifically relate to the Vicksburg Fault Zone, where crude oil is transported by pipeline to Texas refineries.

The failure of the federal government to secure the U.S. border has resulted in a very dangerous environment for our pipeline inspectors, oilfield workers and ranchers along these routes. In addition, the unsecured border threatens 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 shocking number of non-Hispanic, illegal aliens are taking advantage of the flood of illegal alien children 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. For 2014 so far, an internal agency report reveals that:

“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](#))

This report is of particular concern because, as recently as this week, [Egyptian radicals](#) attacked their country’s energy sources to destabilize the government. Last year 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 do this to their own country. 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.

Over 425,000 miles of pipeline bring the economic lifeblood of Texas and the nation to market, with the oil and gas industry making up more than one-third of the [Texas economy](#). A significant portion of this pipeline infrastructure and economic activity is in the Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas, which is in the direct path of this potential hotbed of terrorist activity. The RRC has dozens of inspectors and field staff in the South Texas area whose lives are put in danger on a regular basis each time their job calls them to perform duties in areas made unsafe by cartel activity.

Our mission states that “the Railroad Commission of Texas exists 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.” These revelations are impeding the RRC from achieving its full commitment to accomplishing that mission.

In light of these very concerning issues, I would like to know what steps have been taken by your agency to assure the protection of Texas’ pipeline infrastructure.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Porter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Porter
Texas Railroad Commissioner