

Statement of Rep. Wally Herger:

"Last September, a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives voted to construct 700 miles of new double fencing along the United States-Mexico border. That was an important first step toward doing what the American people expect Congress to do to get this problem under control. Regrettably, the new majority in the House has passed a Homeland Security appropriations bill that severely undermines this project.

"Nine months after the Secure Fence Act was signed into law, only eleven of those 700 miles have actually been built. Yet under the House bill, funding for border security, infrastructure, fencing, and technology is actually cut by approximately \$100 million from last year's level. This reduction, especially in the context of a bill that increases overall spending by over 13%, only reinforces the belief of the American people that the government of the United States is not really serious about securing the borders.

"The bill also contains a very harmful restriction that could prevent much of the fence from being constructed at all. It prohibits any money from being spent on the fence until the Department of Homeland Security 'makes every effort to minimize impacts on wildlife and natural resources.' This is an invitation to tie up the project in never-ending lawsuits from radical environmental groups, several of which have openly stated their opposition to building a fence on the border.

"The real danger to the environment is posed by the illegal immigration and smuggling across the border that the fence is intended to stop. We already have millions of fences all around the country, and none of them have had a serious negative impact on wildlife or natural resources. When our sovereignty and our national security is at stake, it simply does not make sense to drag the process out forever. I strongly supported an amendment to the bill that would have struck this and other dangerous restrictions on the border fence. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated because of near-unanimous opposition from the new majority."

The following is the text of Congressman Herger's radio actuality regarding these provisions. Audio of it can be found at <http://www.house.gov/herger/media/437449.asf> .

Hello, this is Congressman Wally Herger.

With my strong support, last year Congress mandated the construction of a 700-mile border fence.

Months later, only eleven miles have been built.

Now, the new majority has passed a bill that would cut border security funding by \$100 million, and impose regulatory obstacles to building the fence.

The bill passed despite strong opposition from me and other border security advocates.

Washington must get serious about securing our border.