



Kriss Worthington

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CONSENT CALENDAR

January 29, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
 Subject: Condemn Construction of Border Wall - United States and Mexico Border

RECOMMENDATION:

Condemn the construction of a border wall along the international boundary zone connecting the United States of Mexico and the United States of America.

BACKGROUND:

Last year, the United States Congress appropriated 1.2 billion dollars to construct a wall along the United States (US) -Mexico border. The purpose of the project, as suggested by the US Department of Homeland Security, is to help eliminate migration and drug trafficking along the border.

Recently the Department of Homeland Security proceeded with its plan to construct the border wall by giving property owners along the US-Mexico border a 30-day notice asking owners to sign waivers allowing Department personnel access to their property or else the federal government will file a lawsuit so that they can have unimpeded access to the land.

The proposed border wall will have devastating consequences on the local environment along the border, and will result in landowners and farmers losing their land and access to river water for irrigation. It will also negatively affect the relationship between the US and Mexico as well as to indigenous nations.

The border wall would also limit access to parks and historical sites, as well as adversely affect the environmental quality of the region.

In order to facilitate the construction of the wall, the Department of Homeland Security has waived a number of important environmental laws. Additionally, it has indicated that it may need to acquire private property through eminent domain to ensure that the wall is built.

Additionally, the billions of dollars in federal funding designated for the border wall project could be better used for a number of domestic needs such as health care, education and housing.

A number of human rights organizations, as well as the Town of Brownsville, Texas, which is along the US-Mexico border have expressed their opposition to the proposed border wall project.

The City of Berkeley should join these organizations in recognizing the impacts that the proposed border wall will have on local economies, the environment and human rights along the US-Mexico border and express its opposition to the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

CONTACT PERSON:

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