



**David Dewhurst**  
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October 29, 2014

Colonel Steven C. McCraw  
Director  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-4087

Major General John F. Nichols  
Adjutant General  
Texas Military Forces  
P.O. Box 5218  
Austin, Texas 78763-5218

Dear Colonel McCraw and General Nichols:

In June of this year, the Governor and Speaker of the House joined me in calling for a surge of resources, specifically the Department of Public Safety (DPS), into the Rio Grande Valley to target transnational cartel operations, including drug and human trafficking. Modeled after a successful surge operation in fall of 2013, Operation Strong Safety commenced on June 22 with the sole mission of keeping Texans safe.

In July, the Texas National Guard joined Operation Strong Safety, bringing extensive additional expertise and resources to help secure our border against these criminal activities. In the ensuing months, the results have been dramatic. Using Border Patrol apprehension statistics as a metric for operational security on the border, the Rio Grande Valley sector has experienced a greater-than two-thirds drop in illegal border crossings since late June. In effect, DPS and the National Guard have shown that, when sufficient resources are utilized, it is possible to make significant strides in securing our southern border.

The mission, however, is not complete. On October 7, Colonel McCraw testified at the House Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee that as many as half of all illegal crossings may not be resulting in apprehensions. These concerns are magnified in that DPS and the National Guard resources have been targeted on the Rio Grande Valley sector. The border areas extending west to El Paso have not received the benefits of the surge. While there is no doubt that the Rio Grande Valley remains the epicenter of the transnational threat, we must strive to defend all 1,200 miles -- not just one sector to fully secure Texas.

While securing our borders is, without question, a federal responsibility, Texas has an obligation to defend itself independently of the federal government when Washington fails to fulfill its Constitutional duties. As policymakers continue discussions on how to fill the void left by Washington, it is important that the debate be informed by sound strategy and honest budgetary considerations. To that end, I call upon your departments to work together to provide my office as well as the offices of the Governor, Speaker of the House and other lawmakers, with estimates regarding cost, manpower requirements, and potential outcomes for the following:

- Extending current surge operations to cover the entirety of the Rio Grande Valley;
- Extending current surge operations to cover the entirety of the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo sectors;
- Extending current surge operations to cover the entirety of the Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, and Del Rio sectors; and
- Extending current surge operations to cover the entirety of Texas' southwest border.

In these estimates, please be clear regarding potential externalities that may occur with any such strategy. Also, please clearly outline how technology can be leveraged as a force multiplier, especially in the less densely-trafficked portions of the border region. If current federal policies interfere without our ability to effectively leverage available technological resources, please state clearly how our efforts would be hampered so state policymakers can have informed discussions with our Congressional delegation to remove any limitations.

The threats faced by Texans from transnational criminal enterprises are real and significant. Potential terror and biological threats similarly magnify the necessity to ensure that we have plans in place as soon as possible to protect our citizens. Your efforts have made Texas a safer place, and I -- as well as all Texans -- thank you for your service. I look forward to your response as we continue to work together to protect the health and welfare of all Texans.

Sincerely,



David Dewhurst  
Lieutenant Governor