

Imperial Valley Weekly

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Filner Announces New Funding For Local Projects

Congressman Bob Filner announced today that his fight to bring home federal funds for several Imperial Valley projects has had some success. At Congressman Filner's request, over \$1.8 million was included in the Federal Omnibus Appropriations bill for Valley schools, the Brawley Agricultural Research Station, and local law enforcement agencies.

The bill was recently signed into law by the President. In the area of education, Congressman Filner obtained \$500,000 to add to local funding to provide Imperial Valley schools with high-speed internet access.

"There is simply no reason why our schools should not have adequate access to the internet," said Congressman Filner. "The future of our children should be provided through a partnership with the Imperial Irrigation District.

When fully-funded, the project will bring high-speed internet access to all elementary and middle schools in Imperial County, schools in the Coachella Valley Unified School District, potentially all City, County, State, and Federal agencies, libraries, and other community-based organizations. "High-speed internet access is an increasingly crucial learning tool for our students," said John Anderson, Imperial County Superintendent of Schools.

"I am grateful that Congressman Filner was able to obtain this funding. These funds will certainly help this project happen more quickly than it would have."

The Brawley Agricultural Research Station will receive \$324,600 to keep it operational for another year. The field station performs research in support of U.S. agriculture in desert and arid environments.

The station is also preparing for a crucial role in the biosecurity and agriterrorism work that the Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner's office is seeking to deploy. "The Brawley Field Station has been performing critical agricultural research for over 50 years," said Congressman Filner.

"It's future role in biosecurity and agriterrorism prevention makes preserving it even more crucial." "We are very glad that Congress recognizes the innovative work we are doing on barrier cropping and new crops," said John Kershaw, President of the Imperial Valley Conservation Research Center Committee.

Barrier crops eliminate pollutants often found runoff, and provide a healthy food source for farm animals. "And we are pleased that we will be able to continue several crucial agricultural reasearch projects."

Congressman Filner was also successful in obtaining \$1,000,000 for improved law enforcement for the Valley. \$500,000 will be added to local funding to build a seamless emergency communications network from the Pacific Ocean to the high desert. "With three International Ports of Entry, it is crucial that

Imperial County have a high-tech integrated emergency communications network - especially during the tense international period we are now in," said Congressman Filner.

"We rely on our law enforcement and emergency personnel to keep us safe in time of crisis. To do that, they need to be able to share information and coordinate their efforts."

"If disaster strikes, we want to be ready," said El Centro Fire Chief Charles Beard. "Communicating with other agencies in a time of crisis is crucial to our response. These funds are a good step towards finally establishing a first-rate emergency communications system to serve the Valley."

In addition, \$500,000 was also obtained to implement the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Law Enforcement and Incident Command System. These funds will be used to cover overtime hours worked by local law enforcement officers during busy holiday weekends policing the federal recreation area.

"We must make sure that local law enforcement are available to assist federal officers in policing the dunes during busy weekends," said Congressman Filner. "As Imperial Valley's Congressman, this is one of the most effective ways I can fight for the Valley," said Congressman Filner.

"These funds will help meet some serious community needs. This is truly a satisfying part of my job"