

Coffman Calls for Salazar, Napolitano to Testify on Deadly Federal Lands at Southern Border

(WASHINGTON) — Today, Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO) and 19 other Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee sent a letter to Chairman Nick Rahall (D-WV) highlighting the recent violence and increase of criminal activities on public lands near the U.S.-Mexico border. The letter cites many media accounts of violence, crime and other illegal activities and asks for a full committee hearing to examine potential causes and solutions to the serious issue.

In the letter Coffman and his colleagues asserted, “Drug smuggling, murders, human trafficking and other illegal activities have become prevalent on America’s public lands, including national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and other protected areas near our Southern border. In June, the Washington Post reported that since 2006 over 23,000 people have been killed due to drug violence in Mexico—violence that is spilling into, and through, our federal lands.”

“As the committee of jurisdiction over the majority of our federal lands and considering the gravity of the current situation, we believe it is this committee’s duty to act to ensure that both public safety and environmental protection are achieved on public lands by taking the steps necessary to fully secure the border against cartels and criminals. The American people deserve straight answers from the agencies responsible for protecting our borders and public lands. There is simply no excuse for allowing government policies to continue that hamper the Border Patrol and create paths of access to violent criminal activity.”

[Click here](#) to read the entire letter.

In April, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Ranking Member Rob Bishop (R-UT) introduced, and Coffman co-sponsored, [H.R. 5016](#) to ensure that the Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture do not restrict or impede Border Patrol from having operational control of the border.

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