

For Immediate Release: *July 22, 2009*

Washington DC - Congressman Duncan Hunter introduced the Unlawful Border Entry Prevention Act in the U.S. House of Representatives today. This bipartisan legislation, which is cosponsored by Congressmen Ed Royce (R-CA), Brian Bilbray (R-CA), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Bart Stupak (D-MI) and Mike McIntyre (D-NC), provides the Secretary of Homeland Security with complete discretionary authority to build as much as 350 miles of additional reinforced fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Under the existing border fence mandate, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was given until December 2008 to identify specific locations on the Southwest border for infrastructure and fence construction. There is currently no legal authority for DHS to build additional border infrastructure in the event that it is needed.

"The threat of violence, illegal drug smuggling and terrorist activity along the U.S.-Mexico border continues to escalate," said Congressman Hunter. "As the last few remaining miles of border infrastructure are completed and we work to strengthen our overall security presence on the Southwest border, it is important that DHS continue to receive and retain the necessary tools to do its job. This includes the authority to gain immediate and operational control of the border through the construction of additional infrastructure.

"Enforcement has been strengthened considerably along fenced areas of the border, allowing Border Patrol to refocus its efforts as needed. Simply put, fencing works. While this Administration might not have any plans to expand infrastructure on the Southwest border, it should still have the appropriate authority to build infrastructure wherever and whenever necessary."

The Unlawful Border Entry Prevention Act also requires that once a sector of the Southwest border experiences a 40 percent increase in apprehensions from the previous fiscal year, the Secretary of Homeland Security is required to report to Congress within 30 days with a plan to gain operational control of that particular sector.