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<http://jaguarhabitatusa.wordpress.com>

PRIORITY MAIL-REPLY REQUESTED

January 30, 2009

Secretary Janet Napolitano
U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Washington, DC 20528

Content in Brief

As a nation we must not sacrifice our values and our environment in pursuing inappropriate technical solutions to borderland security.

A continuous wall-like fence along the US-Mexico border will doom the critically endangered jaguar in Arizona and New Mexico, have other adverse environmental impacts, and symbolize that America has lost its ability to find creative, non-destructive ways of solving complex problems.

Please end fence construction and begin fence removal to protect the jaguar and other transnational wildlife.

In collaboration with the President, the Secretary of the Interior, and the US Congress, please work with Mexico to establish an international conservation area along the Arizona/New Mexico and Mexico Border, to open a new era of bi-national partnership and problem-solving, create new opportunities for law enforcement and security on both sides of the border, demonstrate American leadership and creativity, and contribute immensely to the conservation of wildlife and natural ecosystems in one the richest ecological regions of the world.

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

First, congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of Homeland Security. We wish you great success!

We are writing out of deep concern about continued construction of a “pedestrian” fence along the US-Mexico border, and its huge impact on the critically endangered jaguar and other wildlife. Jaguars cannot re-build their numbers in Arizona and New Mexico with an impenetrable fence between the two countries. In fact, the fence may also damage what remains of the jaguar population in northern Mexico. Recovery of this magnificent animal and other endangered wildlife under the all-important US Endangered Species Act should be a top priority for the new Obama Administration.

Information on jaguar/wildlife corridors in the border lands region of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico can be found on our website:

<http://jaguarhabitatusa.wordpress.com/habitat-linkages/>. Please contact us if we can help with further details.

We urge that DHS immediately discontinue construction of pedestrian fencing along the Arizona/New Mexico border, and begin fence removal where needed to protect the jaguar and other transnational wildlife. We suggest that vehicle barriers, electronic surveillance, and other low-impact measures and policies be applied in lieu of pedestrian fencing.

We also suggest establishing a special international conservation area along the US-Mexico border in Arizona and New Mexico. A collaboration toward that end between the US and Mexico would open a new era of partnership and problem-solving, create new opportunities for law enforcement and security on both sides of the border, demonstrate American leadership and creativity, and contribute immensely to the conservation of wildlife and natural ecosystems in one the richest ecological regions of the world.

We would appreciate your kind response to our suggestions. Please let us know the extent to which DHS will limit and remove pedestrian fencing along the US-Mexico border in deference to our wildlife, our environment, and our core American values.

Sincerely,

Tony Povilitis

Tony Povilitis, Ph.D.

cc:

President Barack Obama
Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar
Senator John McCain