

Adirondack Council \* Allegheny Defense Project \* Alliance for Global Justice \* Alliance for the Wild Rockies \* American Rivers \* Arizona Wilderness Coalition \* Asian Americans Advancing Justice \* Bark \* Border Action Network \* BorderLinks \* Border Network for Human Rights \* Center for Biological Diversity \* Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee and Immigration Ministries \* Church Council of Greater Seattle \* Clean Water Action \* Coalicion de Derechos Humanos \* Coalition of National Park Service Retirees \* Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection \* Cobb Immigrant Alliance \* Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach \* Conference of Major Superiors of Men \* Conservation Congress \* Conservation Northwest \* Defenders of Wildlife \* Earthjustice \* Endangered Species Coalition \* Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center \* Environment America \* Friends of the Clearwater \* Friends of the Earth \* Friends of Friendship Park \* Friends of the Santa Cruz River \* The Friends of the San Pedro River \* Friends of the Sonoran Desert \* Friends of the Wild Swan \* Great Old Broads for Wilderness \* GreenLatinos \* Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans \* Greenpeace \* Heartwood \* Humane Borders \* Humanitarian Border Solutions Inc. \* Idaho Conservation League \* International League of Conservation Photographers \* Klamath Forest Alliance \* League of Conservation Voters \* Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns \* Maryknoll Sisters, Eastern USA \* Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office \* Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity \* Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office \* Natural Resources Defense Council \* Natural Resources Council of Maine \* National Audubon Society \* National Parks Conservation Association \* NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby \* North Cascades Conservation Council \* Northern Jaguar Project \* Office of Justice Peace and Integrity for Creation of the Comboni Missionaries, North American Province \* Patagonia Area Resource Alliance \* Pax Christi USA \* RESTORE: The North Woods \* Rights for All People \* Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness \* Save America's Forests \* Save the Colorado \* Sequoia ForestKeeper \* Sierra Club \* Sisters of Mercy – Institute Justice Team \* Sky Island Alliance \* Southern Sierra Group \* South Texas Human Rights Center \* Southwest Environmental Center \* Tucson Audubon Society \* The National Korean American Service and Education Consortium \* The Wilderness Society \* Voces de la Frontera \* The Xaverian Brothers \* Western Lands Project \* Western Nebraska Resources Council \* Western Watersheds Project \* WildEarth Guardians \*  
Wildlands Network \* Wilderness Watch

January 27, 2015

**PLEASE OPPOSE H.R. 399, THE “SECURE OUR BORDERS FIRST ACT OF 2015”**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of Americans represented by our organizations, we write to strongly oppose H.R. 399, the “Secure Our Borders First Act of 2015,” in particular Section 3, “Operational Control of the Border,” and Section 13, “Prohibition on Actions that Impede Border Security on Certain Federal Land.” Under the guise of enhancing border security, Section 3 would further militarize natural areas and communities already glutted with border walls, roads and towers; Section

13 would undermine fundamental environmental and conservation laws and would allow further damage to the fragile border environment and the people and communities dependent upon it.

Section 3 calls for the completion of 700 miles of double-layered fencing along the Southwest border previously authorized by the Secure Fence Act even though reports by the Government Accountability Office and other organizations have found no evidence that the 650 miles of barriers already constructed have made a significant contribution to border security. Moreover, the existing fencing, built at a cost of millions of dollars per mile, has caused or exacerbated disastrous flood events in border communities, has fragmented wildlife habitat, and has caused harm to numerous imperiled species. Section 3 also requires additional construction and maintenance of roads in specific locations that would degrade wildlife habitat, air, and water in and adjacent to important natural areas such as Big Bend National Park in Texas.

Section 13 would give unilateral authority to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to build forward operating bases, construct roads, fences, patrol by vehicle and aircraft and more on Federal public and tribal lands within 100 miles of the U.S. borders with both Canada and Mexico. Section 13 also would waive sixteen environmental, historic preservation and conservation laws on Federal public and tribal lands within that 100 mile zone including the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Wilderness Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Antiquities Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the National Park Service Organic Act. This 100-mile exemption is an extreme overreach covering huge swaths of the American landscape encompassing millions of acres of national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, forests and Indian reservations including iconic places such as Joshua Tree National Park, North Cascades National Park, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Glacier National Park, the Boundary Waters Wilderness, White Mountain National Forest, Glacier Bay National Park, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

DHS and its agencies already have unprecedented authority to operate on public lands, including national parks, national monuments, national wildlife refuges and other public lands. In many cases, their actions fall under what the Congressional Research Service has characterized as the largest waiver of law in American history. There is simply no law that prevents, impedes or prohibits the Border Patrol from taking actions needed to fulfill its mission. That is why both DHS and Customs and Border Protection have repeatedly testified that waivers of this type are unnecessary. Indeed, the hasty construction of the existing border wall, without benefit of environmental review, as referenced above, has contributed to several incidents of the wall being knocked down by flood waters as well as other environmental problems.

Sections 3 and 13 would only harm special places, wildlife, and communities along the border while contributing nothing to increase border security. We urge you to oppose H.R. 399 in its current form. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Adirondack Council  
Allegheny Defense Project  
Alliance for Global Justice  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies  
American Rivers  
Arizona Wilderness Coalition  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice  
Bark  
Border Action Network  
BorderLinks  
Border Network for Human Rights  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee and Immigration Ministries  
Church Council of Greater Seattle  
Clean Water Action  
Coalicion de Derechos Humanos  
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees  
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection  
Cobb Immigrant Alliance  
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men  
Conservation Congress  
Conservation Northwest  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center  
Environment America  
Friends of the Clearwater  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of Friendship Park  
Friends of the Santa Cruz River  
The Friends of the San Pedro River  
Friends of the Sonoran Desert  
Friends of the Wild Swan  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
GreenLatinos  
Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans  
Greenpeace

Heartwood  
Humane Borders  
Humanitarian Border Solutions Inc.  
Idaho Conservation League  
International League of Conservation Photographers  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
League of Conservation Voters  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Maryknoll Sisters, Eastern USA  
Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office  
Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
National Audubon Society  
National Parks Conservation Association  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
North Cascades Conservation Council  
Northern Jaguar Project  
Office of Justice Peace and Integrity for Creation of the Comboni Missionaries, North American Province  
Patagonia Area Resource Alliance  
Pax Christi USA  
RESTORE: The North Woods  
Rights for All People  
Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Save America's Forests  
Save the Colorado  
Sequoia ForestKeeper  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of Mercy – Institute Justice Team  
Sky Island Alliance  
Southern Sierra Group  
South Texas Human Rights Center  
Southwest Environmental Center  
Tucson Audubon Society  
The National Korean American Service and Education Consortium  
The Wilderness Society  
Voces de la Frontera  
Western Lands Project  
Western Nebraska Resources Council

Western Watersheds Project

WildEarth Guardians

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The Xaverian Brothers