



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

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## **Governor Richardson Leads Bipartisan Border State Push for Federal Governments to Step Up Border Security**

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson announced today that he and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger are cosponsoring a joint resolution on border security and immigration for consideration by the ten members of the US-Mexico Border Governors Conference that begins today in Austin, TX. The resolution declares US and Mexican governors commitment to work together to facilitate trade and commerce and eradicate criminal activity near and across the border, and calls on the federal government to take specific actions to secure the border.

"Border states cannot wait for Washington, we must take action," said Governor Richardson. "While the federal government is ultimately responsible for border security, I believe stepped up cooperation between American and Mexican border states, especially between law enforcement agencies, can help stop drug smugglers, human traffickers and criminals who exploit our border and threaten the public."

"Federal governments must live up to their responsibility to secure our borders," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "It is imperative that the U.S. and Mexican governments do everything within their power to protect citizens from the public safety threat posed by the illegal trafficking of people and drugs."

The resolution declares that it is the responsibility of Washington and Mexico City to make necessary policy changes to address the underlying causes of the migration of workers from Mexico to the United States.

The resolution affirms that the National Guard is there to temporarily support the Border Patrol, not as militarization of the border. When the number border patrol agents increases, the US must return National Guard forces to their respective states.

The resolution also calls for passing federal U.S. and Mexican laws to criminalize the construction and financing of subterranean tunnels across the U.S./Mexico border. These tunnels, used for smuggling people, drugs and other contraband, pose a serious threat to people and law enforcement on both sides of the border. Since September 11, 2001, authorities have discovered 40 tunnels crossing international borders into the U.S. All but one was on the U.S. southern border.

And the resolution urges the development of a full cross-border law enforcement task force that will target and bring to justice those who engage in human trafficking, the smuggling of drugs and arms, and other serious criminal activity.

The declaration also:

- Articulates that all Mexican citizens living and working in the U.S. should do so legally, and calls for continued effort to simplify legal border crossings.
- Reaffirms the conference's 2005 declaration that enforcement agencies must respect the human rights and safety of all immigrants.

The Border Governor's Conference begins Wednesday, August 23 and continues through Friday, August 25 in Austin, TX. The ten Border Governors include the California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas.

Last August, Governor Richardson declared a border emergency to help local law enforcement officials who are fighting illegal activity. This border emergency declaration freed up \$1.75 million for border counties and local governments to hire additional law enforcement officers. These efforts have resulted in increased drug arrests, more undocumented immigrants caught and a drastic reduction in crime in several New Mexico border communities. Governor Richardson, and three other border governors requested that a provision for \$50 million to assist law enforcement in border states remain in the FY2007 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill.