



Department of Justice

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Department of Justice Announces New Funding Request for Southwest Border Enforcement

WASHINGTON — Today, Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey announced \$100 million in new funding as part of the fiscal year 2009 budget request for the Administration's Southwest Border Enforcement Initiative. If funded by Congress, the new resources will better enable the United States to combat the flow of illegal immigration, drugs, and weapons across our Southwest Border, and to arrest, detain, prosecute, and incarcerate violent criminals, drug offenders, and immigration violators along the Southwest Border.

"Support for the full range of law enforcement operations along our Southwest Border is absolutely critical," said Attorney General Mukasey. "I recently had the chance to visit with federal law enforcement officials along the border and saw firsthand the immense challenges they face and the importance of resources to stem the flow of illegal immigrants, drugs, and weapons, ultimately making our communities and nation safer."

The Department of Justice's FY 2009 budget request contains over \$100 million in new resources, including 265 additional positions, to fight criminal activity at the border. The amount includes over \$20.4 million for the Drug Enforcement Administration, \$9.6 million for Interagency Crime and Drug Enforcement, over \$12.7 million for the U.S. Marshals Service, over \$37.5 million for the Office of the Federal Detention Trustee, \$10 million for the Executive Office for Immigration and Review, and \$8.4 million for U.S. Attorneys' Offices.

The Southwest Border of the United States is the principal arrival zone for most illicit drugs smuggled into the United States, as well as the predominant staging area for the subsequent distribution of drugs throughout the country. Given the magnitude of the threat, it is imperative that new resources be added to disrupt further the organizations responsible for the movement of illicit drugs, proceeds, and weapons across the Southwest Border and to bring their leaders to justice.

The funding request is also important to ensure that the border does not become the means by which terrorists enter the United States or smuggle weapons of mass destruction into the United States using routes and methods established by drug and alien smugglers. Funds are included in the budget request to combat the flow of illegal firearms from the United States into Mexico, an issue highlighted recently in discussions between Attorney General Mukasey and Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza.

In addition, the workload along the Southwest Border for Department of Justice agencies such as the U.S. Attorneys and the U.S. Marshals Service has increased dramatically in recent years as a result of increased efforts of partner federal agencies. The Department of Justice estimates that over 24,000 criminal immigration cases will be filed by U.S. Attorneys over the next two years because of the increase in Border Patrol agents in recent years—from approximately 9,000 agents in FY 2001 to an expected 18,000 by the end of FY 2008.

For more information on the additional funds included in the Justice Department budget for the Southwest Border Enforcement Initiative, please refer to the accompanying Fact Sheet.

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Fact Sheet: Department of Justice Funding Request for Southwest Border Enforcement Initiative

As part of the Southwest Border Enforcement Initiative, the following information provides a breakdown of the \$100 million in additional funding that the Administration seeks for the Department of Justice to fight criminal activity on the Southwest Border.

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA): \$20.4 million (39 positions)

-Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Team (FAST) Expansion: \$7.0 million and 20 positions (18 agents and 2 intelligence analysts) to establish two additional teams for the Western Hemisphere, and funding to deploy them for up to six months annually. The teams will be regionally oriented to assist DEA's host nation counterparts in the Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, where drugs flowing to the United States are produced or transited. These teams will provide the expertise, equipment, and personnel to augment DEA Country Offices targeting the most significant violators, Priority Organizational Targets, and Consolidated Priority Organizational Targets.

-Strategic Drug Flow Enforcement Operations: \$2.0 million to conduct one additional Operational All Inclusive (OAI) deployment each year in the Western Hemisphere. OAI is DEA's primary large-scale and successful Drug Flow Attack enforcement operation in the source, transit, and arrival zones. This operational funding provides for travel, aviation support, intelligence collection, and host nation support.

-Tactical Aircraft Section: \$8.9 million and 3 agent pilots to purchase, operate, and maintain one new Bell 412 twin-engine helicopter to support interdiction operations in the transit zone, including FAST deployments, and address air, maritime, and land drug trafficking threats.

-Southwest Border Staffing: \$2.6 million and 16 positions (9 agents and 2 intelligence analysts) to prevent the flow of drugs across our Southwest Border, which remains a critical front in our nation's defense against both illegal drug trafficking and terrorism.

Interagency Crime and Drug Enforcement (ICDE)\$9.6 million (56 positions)

-Drug Prosecution: \$5.1 million and 50 positions (30 attorneys) to support prosecution activities against significant drug trafficking organizations and money laundering organizations responsible for: (1) transporting or importing drugs and precursor chemicals to Mexico for subsequent distribution to the United States; (2) manufacturing or distributing drugs within Mexico for subsequent distribution to the United States; (3) transporting drugs across the Southwest Border of the United States and/or subsequently distributing those drugs in the United States; and (4) the laundering and the bulk cash smuggling of illicit proceeds across the U.S./Mexico border.

-License Plate Exploitation: \$2.8 million to support communications costs associated with the License

Plate Exploitation Initiative, an effort to link vehicles traveling outbound from the United States into Mexico with Mexico-based Consolidated Priority Organization Targets and affiliated "Gatekeeper" organizations involved in bulk cash smuggling. Also included is \$500,000 to provide sufficient IT infrastructure for the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Fusion Center to process and exploit the license plate data collected. The OCDETF Fusion Center will be able to target the most significant bulk cash smuggling organizations by leveraging the license plate data against its existing database of multi-agency criminal investigative reports.

-Fugitive Apprehension Initiative: \$1.7 million and 6 Deputy U.S. Marshals to increase USMS' capability to apprehend OCDETF fugitives both domestically and in foreign countries, particularly those fugitives linked to South America and Mexico-based drug trafficking organizations.

U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) \$12.7 million (73 positions)

-Prisoner Security and Transportation: \$12.7 million and 73 positions (52 Deputy U.S. Marshals) to manage the increasing workload along the Southwest Border. As the number of illegal immigrants entering America has risen, the USMS has experienced substantial prisoner and fugitive workload growth along the Southwest Border. Total USMS prisoner productions in Southwest Border districts increased by 9 percent from FY 2006 to FY 2007, compared to a 2 percent increase in all other districts. This funding will allow the USMS to meet its responsibilities for protecting and securing federal detainees before, during, and after their judicial proceedings. Included in this initiative is \$2.1 million in non-personnel funding for additional leased prisoner transport vehicles.

Office of the Federal Detention Trustee (OFDT) \$37.6 million

-Detainee Housing and Transportation: \$37.6 million to accommodate an anticipated increase in the number of detainees housed in non-federal facilities. These resources will fund the costs associated with prisoner detention, care and transportation of detainees along the Southwest Border.

Executive Office for Immigration and Review (EOIR) \$10 million

-Digital Audio Recording System (DAR): \$8.3 million for the implementation and maintenance of a Digital Audio Recording system (DAR) to be provided to immigration courts nationwide. This system will substantially improve the audio quality in the immigration courts to record hearings, over the cassette tapes currently used, and will allow the immigration judges to operate the recording system through the use of a desk-top computer.

-Immigration Review Information Exchange System (IRIES): \$1.7 million for IRIES through which EOIR will share mission-critical information with its external business partners, most notably the Department of Homeland Security and the DOJ's Civil Division.

U.S. Attorneys (USA) \$8.4 million (83 positions)

-Southwest Border Prosecution: \$8.4 million and 83 positions (50 attorneys) to support additional prosecutorial efforts along the Southwest Border. The Southwest Border is particularly vulnerable to the operation of cross-border criminal enterprises including: human smuggling, drug smuggling, homicide, robbery, hostage taking, and money laundering. Additional Assistant U.S. Attorneys and paralegals are needed to respond to these cross-border criminal activities and the increases in immigration cases resulting from the substantial increases in Border Patrol Agents and the U.S. Government's overall effort to gain operational control of the border.

Criminal Division (CRM) \$289,000 (2 positions)

-Reducing Gang Violence: \$289,000 and 2 attorneys to combat ever-increasing gang threats facing the nation along the Southwest Border. The 2 attorneys will be part of the Criminal Division's Gang Squad, but

will focus exclusively on Southwest Border enforcement cases and will work in tandem with the DOJ Gang Targeting, Enforcement, and Coordination Center (GangTECC).

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) \$948,000 (12 positions)

-Firearms Industry Regulation: \$948,000 and 12 positions to enhance ATF's ability to inspect and investigate the firearms industry. Firearms-related violence has been perpetrated by warring drug trafficking organizations in border cities such as Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Agents have noted an "iron river of guns" with thousands of weapons per week crossing the border into Mexico from the United States. Approximately 40 percent of those weapons are linked to drug trafficking organizations. These additional positions will strengthen industry oversight in the region and implement a focused inspection program to identify purchasers, traffickers and non-compliant licensees that may be sources of illegally trafficked firearms used by violent criminals.

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