

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES  
COMMISSIONER

March 24, 2011

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Madam Secretary:

I appreciate you taking the time in February and again today to visit the great state of Texas, but I have concerns over the comments you have made suggesting Mexican drug cartel activity has yet to reach American soil. I can assure you our Texas farmers and ranchers are facing violence from the cartels on a regular basis. It troubles me to hear you do not consider the daily attacks on our Texas farmers, ranchers and other citizens to be a national security issue worthy of increased federal enforcement. Madam Secretary, the violence is here, and it has made the war on drugs obsolete – we now face the drug war on America!

In order to give voice to those who provide us with the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world, the Texas Department of Agriculture recently launched [www.ProtectYourTexasBorder.com](http://www.ProtectYourTexasBorder.com). I invite you and your colleagues to visit this lookout post for Americans living on the border, facing this violence everyday. I encourage you to hear firsthand accounts of trespassing, intimidation, drug running and property damage taking place right here in Texas. We are very much at war and I urge you to recognize the threat of Mexican drug cartels as being a clear and present danger to our citizens and to the safe production of the United States food supply.

Your Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, John Morton, recently stated, “The border is as secure as I have ever seen it in 20 years.” Few Texas border farmers and ranchers would agree. I have attempted to make contact with Director Morton on several occasions to express my concerns and invite him to join me on the border and hear firsthand accounts of the dangers facing Texas farmers and ranchers. Through his staff, Mr. Morton has refused to even have a phone conversation with me.

I ask you and your Washington colleagues to realize this is not just a Texas problem, but rather a national security breach. As such, I strongly urge you to deploy sufficient federal assistance to enforce our laws, defend our sovereignty and protect American citizens from terrorism at home.

Our border patrol, state and local law enforcement officers are doing an outstanding job, but they are working with limited resources. While we have made strides toward more concerted security efforts in border cities, the drug cartels are now increasingly turning toward rural areas. These areas need help



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now. Until sufficient federal assistance arrives, landowners will be forced to abandon their land, leaving it vulnerable to criminal occupation, while retreating from farming and ranching, and jeopardizing the food supply upon which we've all come to rely. We do not like being dependent on foreign oil; we cannot become dependent on foreign food.

Americans should not be faced with homeland insecurity at the hands of criminals who illegally enter the United States. Through our website, [ProtectYourTexasBorder.com](http://ProtectYourTexasBorder.com), we are asking Washington to hear our voices and answer the call of duty. This is a war. We ask that you help us fight it.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd Staples". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Todd Staples

TS/BB/mm