



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

### AGENDA ITEM

**DATE:** October 16, 2001

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT:** IMPROVING OUR NATION'S BORDER SECURITY (District: ALL)

**SUMMARY:**

#### **Overview**

The horrendous terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 struck at the heart of this nation and served as an ominous reminder that every community can be at risk for a similar devastating act. San Diego County's unique location is home to the nation's largest contingent of military bases, resources and personnel. With our close proximity to Mexico, San Diego County also has the busiest port of entry in world. Because of these two factors combined with San Diego County's size, economy, tourism, population and demographics, this region could be at greater risk than other areas to face a terrorist attack.

Although the flow of traffic through our border has recently been disrupted, security measures need to be enhanced for the long term to help alleviate our vulnerability. The President has established a new Office of Homeland Security and the timing is critical to offer input. In light of circumstances that San Diego County faces in securing the safety of residents and visitors to our region, action is needed to ensure that our recommendations are considered.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

##### **SUPERVISOR JACOB AND SUPERVISOR COX:**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chairman's signature to President George W. Bush, the local Congressional delegation and our Federal legislative advocate, communicating our Board's support to secure our borders, develop a tamper-proof permanent Social Security card, improve the ability of INS to track expired visas, and immediately install the technology at the Border to scan laser border-crossing visas.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to forward the Board's position to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and new Office of Homeland Security for consideration and implementation.

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**Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this request.

**BACKGROUND:**

San Diego County's unique location is home to the nation's largest contingent of military bases, resources and personnel. With our close proximity to Mexico, San Diego County also has the busiest port of entry in world. Because of these two factors combined with San Diego County's size, economy, tourism, population (larger than the population of 19 individual states) and demographics, this region could be at greater risk than other areas to face a terrorist attack. Residents are beginning to express their concerns. According to a recent Union Tribune survey of San Diego County residents, 84% believe the area is very likely or somewhat likely to be vulnerable to a terrorist attack.

On September 22, 2001, Mr. Ruben Barrales, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, spoke in San Diego to the U.S./Mexico Border Counties Coalition and encouraged border counties to convey their security concerns to his office, which he will pass along to former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, Director of the new Office of Homeland Security. With Director Ridge now sworn in by the President, the timing is pivotal to share our concerns.

Although the flow of traffic through our border has recently come under heavier scrutiny, security measures need to be enhanced for the long term to help alleviate vulnerability. During these economically challenging times, we must strike a balance between the promotion of economic prosperity through international trade and national security. As the Federal government allocates funding for national security, our borders must remain a top priority. More U.S. Customs agents and advanced technology are needed to more carefully inspect a greater number of vehicles being checked and to be able to better identify suspicious vehicles and persons. In addition, more U.S. Border Patrol agents are needed to secure long stretches of the border that remain dangerously wide open.

American cities that border Canada face similar risks with possible terrorists crossing over into the United States. The Federal government needs to re-evaluate the security measures currently being practiced and enhance the resources that are available to every point of entry into the United States.

One of the most alarming facts discovered is that most of the 19 hijackers involved in the terrorist attacks held expired tourist, work or student visas. In addition, about 80 other people under investigation have been held on immigration related charges, ranging from expired visas to false documents. Over 500,000 people were in the United States on student visas last year and approximately 10,000 people with student visas reside in San Diego County at any given time. Tougher standards must be implemented on issuing student visas and INS officials need to better track people with expired visas.

Also, the effort to develop a permanent social security card that cannot be falsified or duplicated takes on a new importance following the attack on America. This enhanced social security card

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would have a photo, a fingerprint and digital information. The capability already exists to manufacturer this type of a card and it is long overdue to replace the paper social security card. The State of California recognized a similar need for change in identification due to the deficiencies of the older style paper drivers' license. California's change radically upgraded the quality of the license to incorporate advanced technology, making it difficult to alter or reproduce.

In light of circumstances that San Diego County faces in securing the safety of residents and visitors to our region, action is needed to ensure that our recommendations are considered. This Board letter directs the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chairman's signature to President George W. Bush, the local Congressional delegation and our Federal legislative advocate, communicating our Board's urging to secure our borders, develop a tamper-proof permanent Social Security card, improve the ability of INS to track expired visas, and immediately install the technology at the Border to scan laser border-crossing visas. In addition, the Chief Administrative Officer will be forwarding the Board's position to the new Office of Homeland Security for consideration and implementation. We urge your support for these recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

DIANNE JACOB  
Supervisor, Second District

GREG COX  
Supervisor, First District

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**CONCURRENCE(S)**

- |                                                                  |                              |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |                              |
| Written Disclosure per County Charter<br>Section 1000.1 Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| <b>GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR</b>                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| <b>CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Requires Four Votes                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| <b>GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION<br/>TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| <b>COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE</b>                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| <b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES</b>                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |

**Other Concurrence(s):**

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:**

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**  
(continued)

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**

**CONTRACT NUMBER(S):**

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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**DEPARTMENT:**

**PROGRAM:**

**PROPOSAL:**

FUTURE YEARS ESTIMATED BUDGET OF PROPOSAL IF ADOPTED				
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Budgeted Amount For Proposal	Proposed Change in Budgeted Amount	Proposed Revised Current Year Budget (a+b)	1st Subsequent Year	2nd Subsequent Year

Direct Cost

Revenue/Other Offset

**NET GENERAL  
FUND COST**

Staff Years

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Sources of Revenue/Other Offset for Proposed Change and Subsequent Years:

**Space-Related Impacts:** Will this proposal result in any additional space requirements?  Yes  N/A

**Support/Other Departmental Impacts:**  Yes  N/A

**Remarks:**  Yes  N/A