



## Senator Feinstein Announces Border Tunnel Legislation Included in Homeland Security Appropriations Bill

September 26, 2006

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today announced that legislation to protect the U.S. borders from underground smuggling routes is included in the FY'07 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill approved by a Senate-House Conference Committee late Monday.

The legislation closes a loophole in federal law by criminalizing the act of constructing or financing a tunnel or subterranean passage across an international border into the United States. Since 9/11, at least 44 border tunnels have been discovered in the United States, all but one have been on the southern border. The House and Senate are expected to approve the Conference Report later this week and send it to the President for his signature.

**“In the interest of national security, we must take action to prevent the construction of secret, underground passageways into the United States,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“Weapons, drugs, and even terrorists can be smuggled through these border tunnels. It is hard to believe that there is not already a federal crime to punish those involved with the financing, construction, and use of these tunnels. Our borders are our first line of defense, so I am pleased this measure has been included in the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill.”**

Senator Feinstein earlier this year inspected a half-mile long tunnel stretching from Tijuana, Mexico to an abandoned warehouse in San Diego. The tunnel is the longest cross-border tunnel discovered in U.S. history, and reached a depth of more than nine stories below ground. The tunnel had ample ventilation and groundwater drainage systems, cement flooring, lighting, and a pulley system. Authorities seized over 4,200 pounds of marijuana in the tunnel, and have attributed the operation to a well-known Mexican drug cartel.

Senator Feinstein introduced the legislation with Senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) after touring the tunnel and the Senate approved including the bill in the Homeland Security spending measure. A similar bill was introduced in the House by Representatives David Dreier (R-Calif.) and Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.).

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