



JEFFERSON COUNTY SHERIFF

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January 12, 2009

John C. Bates
Chief Patrol Agent - Blaine Sector
U.S. Border Patrol
2410 Natures Path Way
Blaine, WA 98230-9156

RE: Operation Stonegarden

Dear Chief Bates,

First, I wanted to express my appreciation for the professional presentation regarding "STONEGARDEN" that SBPA Cano provided to us last Friday. He furnished us with the underlying documents in advance, which was very helpful.

As I explained to SBPA Cano, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (and me specifically) cannot agree to the terms of the "STONEGARDEN" operation as presented.

The "STONEGARDEN" operation will provide the mechanism through which the Department of Homeland Security will allocate a total of \$60 million dollars nationwide to local units of government in Land Border states over the next 3 years. Since agencies on the Olympic Peninsula do not have a land border with a foreign country, and our county in particular does not actually have an international boundary (contrary to popular belief), it is unclear how our region would qualify. None the less we were invited to participate.

Unfortunately, the inclusion of language describing illegal aliens as "criminal aliens" that "are drawn here by criminal activities", coupled with the requirement participating agencies (described as "Friendly Forces") agree to detain illegal aliens and turn them over to the Border Patrol, makes the overall document unacceptable.

I understand many eligible agencies have agreed to participate. In exchange they will be receiving "free" equipment such as laptop computers, mobile digital computers, patrol boats, and radio towers. Those are strong inducements to participate for local cash strapped agencies.

It is also clear that those agencies which choose not to commit to the "STONEGARDEN" agenda for whatever reasons will not be eligible for this Federal largess. There is also an implied message through the "Friendly Forces" language that agencies such as mine that choose not to participate are unfriendly, and somehow suspect. That is very unfortunate. As you and I have discussed in the past, we do not have the resources or authority to enforce non-criminal Federal violations of immigration laws.

It is also unfortunate that taxpayer dollars provided by our elected representatives, distributed through Homeland Security with the intent to enhance local law enforcement, are held hostage to the very narrow operational agenda of your agency in regards to the non-criminal status of aliens. The dollars would have been better spent specifically to enhance the ability of local agencies to assist in the protection of our nation – not on a small portion of the Homeland Security mandate. Failing that, providing the funds to enhanced Federal air and sea interdiction efforts would have been more effective.

I have always been a strong advocate of increased meaningful Federal law enforcement resources for our region. I have conveyed that directly to our U.S. Senators and Representative. Jefferson County has both an international point of entry at the Port of Port Townsend and the Jefferson County Airport. Neither of which has a full time or part-time Federal staff presence. The air and water resources provided to prevent unlawful entry to our shores are inadequate. The support from traditional law enforcement partners such as the FBI have been diluted and redirected. Those are the types of enhanced Federal resources that I have advocated for and continue to request and support.

I have the highest regard and respect for the men and women of the Border Patrol and the mission that you have been given. Please be assured we will continue to be vigilant for real terrorist threats to our nation. We will provide assistance as needed and appropriate, and we will continue to expect the same from the Border Patrol. In the meantime, we will monitor our beaches, our ports, and our infrastructure with the limited resources we have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael D. Brasfield". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael D. Brasfield
Jefferson County Sheriff

cc: U.S. Senator Patty Murray
U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
U.S. Representative Norm Dicks