

## Rep. Hunter wants ocean-to-gulf fence

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A San Diego County congressman plans to introduce a bill soon that calls for a fence blocking off the entire U.S.-Mexico border from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, at a cost of about \$1 million per mile.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-El Cajon, has announced that the legislation would authorize construction of a high-security fence with 25 new ports of entry, accompanied by several other security measures.

A spokesman for Hunter, a longtime advocate of border fencing, said the bill would likely be ready to introduce next week. The price tag would run into the billions, because the border with Mexico is almost 2,000 miles long.

"Regardless of what this legislation as a whole will cost, the idea is that it is going to save us money in the end," said Joe Kasper, Hunter's press secretary. "What illegal immigration costs us each year is overwhelming. That is something we can all agree on."

Building a fence along the entire border is not something everyone can agree on. While some anti-illegal immigration activists cheered the idea, leaders of the union that represents Border Patrol agents didn't think it would solve much.

"It gives (taxpayers) something visible they can wrap their arms around, so they can say 'Here are my tax dollars at work,' " said T.J. Bonner, president of the National Border Patrol Council. "These high visibility things, these are feel-good things that really do very little to correct the problem. It's the jobs, stupid."

The fence idea is welcomed by conservative activist Colin Hanna, who heads a Philadelphia-area organization called Let Freedom Ring. Hanna has promoted building a border-wide fence for several months on a Web site called WeNeedAFence.com and in television spots.

Hanna said he has met with Hunter to discuss the fence idea.

"I don't want to take credit, but I think we were a source of encouragement for (Hunter)," Hanna said, adding that his main motivation for supporting more fencing is national security.

Hunter's plan would include various additional enforcement measures at the border, the workplace and elsewhere, with the ocean-to-gulf land barrier as the centerpiece.

Reinforced fencing exists along some parts of the border, including the urban area of San Diego County, but long stretches have either no fence or simple barbed wire barriers.

Regardless of how much fencing there is, say Border Patrol union leaders, people who really want to get into the country will find a way.

"Even if you build if you build a fifty-foot-high fence, the Great Wall of China, you still have the ports of entry

and you still have everywhere else: the ocean, the sea ports, the airports," said Chris Bauder, president of local 1613 of Border Patrol union in San Diego.

"All it is going to do is push the smugglers to use other methods they already have available to them."

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