



## ***Homeland Security at the Local Level***

### ***Defining the Issue***

*Homeland Security* is a broad national effort by all levels of government to protect US territory from hazards, both internal and external, natural and man-made. The term is also used to refer to the United States Department of Homeland Security itself.

Issues addressed by the Department of Homeland Security include, but are not limited to, border security, citizenship and immigration, civil rights and liberties, protection of critical infrastructure, cybersecurity, disaster assistance, economic prosperity (flow of goods and services), human trafficking, science and technology applications, community resilience, privacy, transportation and terrorism.

What aspects of homeland security do members of your community council see as important issues to address for farms, agribusinesses and your neighborhood?

### ***AFBF Policy***

**National Security** - The president and Congress should maintain a foreign policy of peace through strength. We support:

- A secure United States border and a strong national defense policy, encouraging efficient use and accountability of tax dollars while eliminating waste;
- A national security policy that prioritizes protecting the Nation's food, fiber, water supply, critical agricultural materials and fuel;
- Coordination between USDA and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on issues affecting agriculture;
- Reconsideration of the rules and regulations by DHS concerning national incident management systems as they apply to rural communities of 10,000 people or less;
- A national comprehensive energy policy that will reduce the nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy.

We oppose:

- Any legislative or regulatory action, by DHS that will result in undue restrictions on agriculture;
- Assessing registration fees on farmers who are required to register with the DHS for propane or other agricultural inputs stored on farm;

**U.S. - Mexico Border Security** - We need to secure our United States borders and reduce terrorism through the following methods:

- Complete fencing or other barriers where possible on the U.S. - Mexico border including an adjacent roadway allowing better access for the border patrol and any other agencies to secure the border;
- Department of Homeland Security enforcing and maintaining the barriers on the border;
- Military presence on the border with rules of engagement defined and expanded;
- An emphasis on deploying technology and personnel based on the unique needs of enforcement agencies on a sector by sector basis, including electronic surveillance technology, fixed wing and helicopter and implementation of unmanned aerial systems for night and day surveillance;
- Full communications coverage for civilians, law enforcement and military, including phone tower construction throughout the border region;
- The use of a virtual fence or other electronic surveillance; technology across agriculture lands where a physical fence is not practical;
- Operation Streamline, or similar programs, to process and detain undocumented or unauthorized persons through the Department of Justice; and
- Providing maximum funding for these programs to assist in securing our border.

**General Immigration** – We support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) conducting its enforcement activities with respect to civil rights, in a humane manner and with minimal disruption to agricultural business. Just compensation should be given to owners for any damages done to property or business during DHS enforcement activities;

**Biosecurity** - Protecting our nation's food, fiber, water supply and critical industrial agricultural materials should be a top priority. We condemn acts of terrorism by both foreign and domestic perpetrators and support the protection of our people, resources and industry.

We support: Actions by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that ensure agriculture's ability to produce food and fiber, including establishing a permanent sub-cabinet position within DHS to deal with plant and animal protection measures, and ensuring there is agricultural representation on departmental advisory boards and committees.

### ***OFBF Policy***

**Homeland Security** - We support the protection of individual rights and property rights when affected by Homeland Security issues.

We oppose the mandatory use of social security numbers as a means of identification unless authorized under the Right to Privacy Act of 1974.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. What aspects of homeland security most impact your neighborhood? Do they have to do with human/quality of life issues (Examples: citizenship and immigration, civil rights and/or human trafficking), facilities protection (Examples: Roads and bridges, utilities, Internet, locks and dams) or community resilience (Example: disaster response and/or economic prosperity)?
2. What do you consider agriculture's leadership role in enhancing homeland security?

3. Are there issues facing the community that should be seen in the context as a homeland security issue?
4. How does your community council want to work with the county Farm Bureau to address homeland security issues at the local level?