



July 7, 2009

**Secretary Janet Napolitano
US Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528**

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

We are writing to request that you act immediately to restore routine public access to Friendship Park, the historic venue overlooking the Pacific Ocean where for generations people have met to visit with friends and family at the U.S.-Mexico border fence.

We recognize that both nations face legitimate security concerns at the border, and we understand that U.S. Border Patrol agents cannot tolerate the smuggling of contraband and attempts at illegal entry to the United States at Friendship Park.

At the same time, Friendship Park is a unique venue of great historical significance to both Mexico and the United States, and has served as the centerpiece of California's Border Field State Park since its inauguration by then-First Lady Pat Nixon in 1971. Our government should continue to embrace its regular public use to promote the kind of friendship on which the true security of both nations depends.

We are confident that your Department, by working in a spirit of genuine collaboration with community stakeholders from San Diego and Tijuana, can create a plan that will allow for Friendship Park to remain a safe location where the friendship between the peoples of the two nations is celebrated.

Specifically, we believe that security, safety and friendship can be ensured at Friendship Park through the following measures:

- 1) A careful allocation of staff which acknowledges that Friendship Park is a unique location warranting special accommodations;
- 2) Training in public relations, crowd control, Spanish language, cultural competency and constitutional rights for all staff who will be assigned to work the park;
- 3) Supervised access to the historic monument and the beach below during all daylight hours;
- 4) An appropriate ceremony at the earliest possible date to celebrate the park's re-dedication to the cause of international friendship.

c/o 3758 30th Street / San Diego, CA 92104

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www.friendshippark.org

We have been encouraged in recent weeks as President Obama and countless administration officials have spoken enthusiastically about a new era of collaboration between the United States and Mexico. We request that you act with great urgency to see that routine public access to Friendship Park is restored as soon as possible, and that the park is returned to its rightful place as a revered symbol of the unique friendship between the two nations.

Sincerely,

Friends of Friendship Park – *see pages 3 – 7 for list of signatories*

Cc:

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State Senator Christine Kehoe, California State Senate, District 39
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Councilmember Donna, Frye, San Diego City Council, Sixth District
Councilmember Todd Gloria, San Diego City Council, Third District
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Organizations listed for identification purposes only

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Border Angels, San Diego, CA
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San Diego Democratic Club, San Diego, CA
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San Diego Human Relations Commission, San Diego, CA
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium, San Diego, CA
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The Peace Resource Center, San Diego, CA
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