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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH,
EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

February 23, 2010

Senator Joseph Lieberman, Chairman
Senator Susan Collins, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20528

Senators Lieberman and Collins:

I am writing today to request the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hold a hearing to review the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) \$6.7 billion SBInet program to create a "virtual fence" along the Southwest border.

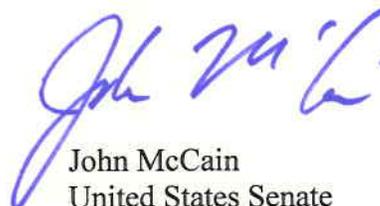
Earlier this month, the Associated Press published an article entitled, "Border fence plagued by glitches, long delays," which states, "Having spent \$672 million so far with little to show for it ... the virtual fence was supposed to be completed by 2011; that date has slipped to 2014..." Due to these continued delays and potential cost overruns, I believe the Committee should immediately examine the program's failures and to begin to explore alternatives to securing the Southwest border as soon as possible.

As you know, SBInet was intended to cover the entire 2,000 mile Southwest border by 2011; however, according to the Executive Director of SBInet, "By the end of this year . . . we should have 53 miles [completed]." This inability to meet the Department's expectations raises serious concerns about how taxpayer funds have been spent and raises questions whether the contract for this program should be extended when it is presented for renewal in September.

While Secretary Napolitano's call for an assessment of the program is appreciated, the complexity and scope of this problem requires congressional oversight. I believe it is important we hear from the Executive Director of SBInet, the program's chief contractor, as well as from witnesses that can provide immediate alternatives to SBInet to secure the Southwest border.

Thank you for considering my request on this important matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senate

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