Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 16, 2016

The Honorable Roberta Jacobson
Ambassador of the United States of America
American Embassy, Mexico City, Mexico
P.O. Box 9000
Brownsville, TX 78520-0900

Dear Ambassador Jacobson,

As you assume your role, we write to request your assistance raising a critical water infrastructure issue on the U.S. – Mexico border in the vicinity of Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora. Unfortunately, problems with stormwater structures at the border are threatening the integrity of infrastructure critical to cross-border trade.

The Grand Tunnel, which conveys stormwater runoff under the critically important Dennis DeConcini Land Port of Entry, is in serious jeopardy of collapsing. Last month, the U.S. International Water and Boundary Commission hosted a meeting that highlighted the urgency of the situation and the challenges of coordination of efforts across overlapping jurisdictions. Further complicating U.S. efforts is the increasing stormwater flow from Mexico that is delivered through deteriorating infrastructure.

Solving this problem will require addressing stormwater in Mexico in addition to shoring up the tunnel on the U.S. side of the border. This pressing issue arises in addition to longstanding problems with a cross-border wastewater conveyance pipe, known as the International Outfall Interceptor, that has been repeatedly threatened by smuggling attempts that can rupture the pipe and contaminate the Santa Cruz River. A failure of the Grand Tunnel that causes damage or closure of the DeConcini would have dire consequences for crucial cross-border trade. We seek your support in raising this issue with your counterparts in Mexico and urge the two countries to work together in addressing the problem.

We thank you in advance for your continued time and attention to this issue. As always, we ask that this matter be handled in strict accordance with all applicable agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,

JEFF FLAKE
United States Senator

JOHN MCCAIN
United States Senator

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

MARTHA MCSALLY
Member of Congress