

WALLY HERGER
2^D DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0502

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CHAIRMAN
HUMAN RESOURCES
TRADE

June 8, 2006

The Honorable John Walters, Director
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Walters:

I am writing to respectfully seek your support for the Central Valley California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area's (CVC HIDTA) application to add Shasta County, California, to its membership. Shasta County is located in the congressional district I represent.

Currently, our most significant drug threat in Northern California is the production and distribution of methamphetamine (meth), which often causes erratic behavior, distorted perceptions of reality, and violent criminal conduct. It is unquestionable that the CVC HIDTA has dealt a significant blow to criminal drug manufacturers, including Mexican drug trafficking organizations, since its creation in 1999. Yet the challenge to apprehend drug smugglers and terminate meth labs remains very difficult, especially since many traffickers have become experts at relocating and producing meth in many localities.

I am deeply concerned that, despite the dedicated and exceptional teamwork of state and local law enforcement agencies, scores of drug traffickers have found haven in Shasta County. As you know, Interstate Highway 5, which runs through my district, is a prominent route for drug smugglers. As the noose tightens in the Central Valley, regrettably, many drug traffickers have fled to the northern corridor of Interstate Highway 5. Additionally, Mexican drug trafficking organizations are operating large-scale marijuana plantation grows on public lands in Shasta County, specifically federal lands owned by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service. These movements have had a detrimental impact in the district I represent, and have hindered the efforts of law enforcement to terminate narcotic production and intercept the transportation of illegal substances.

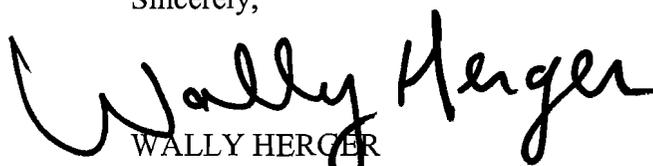
Local law enforcement leaders have reported to me clear and troubling evidence that demonstrates the enormous presence of narcotics in California's 2nd Congressional District. In just eighteen months, from July 2003 to December 2004, Shasta County law enforcement officials seized over 4000 grams of methamphetamine, 35,380 grams of marijuana, and 139,615 grams of cocaine in the course of routine traffic stops. During 2005, 218,384 marijuana plants were harvested by law enforcement in Shasta County, an increase of more than 300% over 2004. This was the highest number of marijuana plants pulled in any California county in 2005, and the overwhelming majority was harvested from Forest Service land and Whiskeytown National Park. Furthermore, 3 meth labs were reported to the Drug Enforcement Agency, and 12 pounds of crystal meth were seized in a single raid on a Mexican drug trafficking organization.

Although these statistics manifest the current effectiveness of the intra-law enforcement agencies' efforts to combat narcotic manufacturing and disbursement, I believe an increased federal presence, specifically the extension of the CVC HIDTA to Shasta County, would assist greatly the effort to apprehend drug smugglers.

As you know, shortly after the founding of the CVC HIDTA, Congress expressed an interest to soon expand the affiliation to encompass part or all of the 2nd Congressional District. The time has come, I believe, to start seriously pursuing such an expansion. I understand that the CVC HIDTA has requested that Shasta County be added and that the Office of National Drug Control Policy has final authority to approve this request. It is in this light that I respectfully request your approval to include Shasta County in the CVC HIDTA.

Thank you for your service, and I appreciate your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions about this issue, please feel free to contact me directly or have your staff contact Jay Sulzmann of my Washington office at 202-225-3076.

Sincerely,



WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress

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