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## *House of Representatives*

### NADBank Reforms Are Not Enough

**HON. BOB FILNER**  
OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, I do represent the entire California-Mexico border, so I am a border Congressman; and I must say, we have some difficulties with the proposed legislation. The gentlewoman from Ohio -- and I am sorry that it had to take someone from the hinterlands to explain to us that this whole issue of NAFTA and NADBank need to be discussed by this body in a far more important way than a bill on suspension that gives us 10 minutes to debate -- the gentlewoman is entirely correct. And just because it is only the NADBank that falls within the jurisdiction of the Banking Committee is no reason to limit this House from a fuller discussion. The Banking Committee can in fact go in with other committees and have that discussion. The gentlewoman was absolutely right: jobs have been lost, millions, because of NAFTA.

I live in San Diego, California, a community impacted by NAFTA. Did the community adjustment investment fund or NADBank do anything for our community? No. Is it going to do anything with the proposed reforms? I do not know. But I am very wary.

When NAFTA was passed, there was no infrastructure put in place to realize some of its benefits. For example, in San Diego, California, 3,000 trucks a day now cross the border from Mexico to the United States. There is no highway that takes those 3,000 trucks from the border crossing to the interstate highway system. I have been trying to get it built for the last 10 years. We have a city street that takes those trucks; it is one of the most dangerous roads in America. Has NADBank helped that? No. The environment which NADBank was limited to before these reforms, the maquiladoras which NAFTA brought to the border, hundreds of them, employing thousands of Mexican workers, do not have to abide by any of the environmental rules that we establish. So they end up dumping their toxic materials in the gullies and ravines in Mexico. You know where that ends up? I got 50 million gallons, now millions of gallons in the last few years of raw sewage floating through my district in the Tijuana River to the Pacific Ocean. In Imperial County to the east of San Diego, there are millions of gallons of raw sewage flowing through the New River, then the

Alamo River, to the Salton Sea. Did NADBank take care of anything there? Nothing.

Those same maquiladoras brought Mexican workers to the border. What did it pay them? No increase in wages. In fact, wages fell. And do you know what happened when the folks who came to the Maquilas who thought they were going to get high wages and did not? What happened? Illegal immigration to America. Did NADBank do anything to help us with that? Nothing.

Two power plants have just opened up in Mexicali, Mexico, to service the needs of California, power needs. Did they have to follow the environmental rules of our community? No. Can the border patrol stop air pollution? No. Did NADBank help us solve any of that? No.

I agree that the folks who have worked on this, this is a step forward. I do not have any doubts about that. The lower-than-market interest rates, which prevented really any loans from being made, is absolutely necessary. The expansion of the definition of what projects would be accepted is obviously a very important step forward. But there is a backwards step that you ought to have maybe said something about in your legislation.

As I understand it, the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission, the board of that and the board of NADBank are being merged. BECC was one of the few places where you had any community input, and now we are not going to have any. San Diego and Tijuana had virtually no input. Mexicali and Calexico in Imperial County had no input. El Paso, no input. Brownsville, no input. Where is the

community input for the reform bank that you are putting in? We at the border communities, and I will tell you even more the inland communities, if I may say so, need to have input into what is going on with the NADBank. It is not serving our communities. I do not see any step forward that will change that.

Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of Treasury when I asked him a few years ago, and this was in a previous administration, how was NADBank doing, he had no idea. It has been put in a corner somewhere because of an attempt to get a few votes for NAFTA. It was set up to do nothing, and it fulfilled those expectations. I do not see any reforms really that will make NADBank work for America and American workers. I thank the gentlewoman for allowing us to have this debate.

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Mr. Speaker, just quickly, the fact that this legislation does not say anything about the merged boards of BECC and NADBank, you could have said something about it. Just because you did not, do not criticize the fact that this is a backwards step. If you want to move forward, then change that, too. And we need to have the support of the Chair and those who are supporting this bill for some money for the community adjustment investment fund. It has been zeroed out by the administration.

So, yes, there are some reforms here. The question is how much money are we going to give it and how much community input are we going to allow. A report to Congress on a yearly basis does not allow the community input that this board needs.