

Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Legislative Hearing
1324 Longworth House Office Building
March 11, 2025
10:15 A.M.

H.R. 1820 (Rep. Ciscomani), “*Federal Lands Amplified Security for the Homeland Act*” or the “*FLASH Act*”

Questions from Rep. Hageman for Mr. Thaddeus Cleveland, Sheriff, Terrell County, Texas.

Sheriff Cleveland, the Tohono O’odham Nation reservation covers a large stretch of land along the U.S.-Mexico border in southern Arizona, and it’s been well-documented that the cartel regularly uses this land as a corridor for smuggling people, drugs, and weapons into the country. In fact, the Nation’s tribal elder acknowledged in 2019 that “it’s no secret that a lot of our tribal members are involved in the smuggling of migrants and drugs” through the reservation, which spans 62 miles of the international border (ABC News).

1. Based on your experience in southern Arizona and West Texas, how significant a role does the lack of federal enforcement or tribal cooperation in areas like the Tohono O’odham reservation play in enabling cartel activity?
2. What lessons should Congress take from these gaps in enforcement when considering federal land policy reforms under the FLASH Act?
3. Should the FLASH Act or related legislation address tribal coordination and accountability, particularly when tribal lands are being exploited for transnational criminal operations?