



PIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Mark D. Napier, Sheriff

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: February 7, 2018

To: Honorable Ramon Valadez, Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Sheriff Mark D. Napier

Subject: Reconsideration of Operation Stonegarden Grants

On February 6, 2018, the Board of Supervisors voted against approving Operation Stonegarden grant funding for the most recent funding cycle. A total of \$1,136,798 in overtime and fringe benefits funding as well as \$237,967 in equipment funding is at stake. I am writing to you to provide some additional details regarding this grant program in hopes that you, and the Board, will revisit the issue and reconsider its position on the matter.

The equipment funding is destined to upgrade a video downlink system mounted in Sheriff's Department aircraft. This downlink allows the livestreaming of video from the aircraft to the Sheriff's Department Administration Building, the Emergency Operations Center, and ground personnel via secure internet access. The acquisition of this equipment is dependent on the approval of these grant funds and additional State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) funds. These SHSGP funds (\$121,924) are contingent upon the approval of the Stonegarden grant; the SHSGP funding will also be forfeited and returned if this grant is not approved.

Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) deployments are revenue neutral and neither the Sheriff's Department, nor Pima County, has incurred any direct costs as all overtime salaries, including benefits costs, are reimbursed through the grant. Mileage for vehicles used during OPSG operations is also reimbursed through the grant.

The Sheriff's Department has participated in Operation Stonegarden, in coordination with the United States Border Patrol, since 2004. The primary role of deputy sheriffs when participating in OPSG is to identify and investigate illegal activities, including narcotics and human trafficking as well as any other violation of state law. Arizona Revised Statutes § 13-2319, Smuggling, specifically prohibits human trafficking and several other state statutes prohibit the possession, sale, and transportation of illegal drugs. While it is possible for deputies to encounter illegal entrants, they are not trained, certified, or directed to enforce federal immigration law.

Most OPSG operations are conducted in rural and remote parts of Pima County, including Ajo, Three Points, Sasabe, Arivaca, and State Route 83. Funding available through OPSG grants has provided an avenue for deputies to deploy into these rural areas more frequently than otherwise possible during regular patrol shifts. This helps the Sheriff's Department provide a stronger presence to deter criminal activity and prevent the victimization of Pima County residents. Furthermore, this increased presence helps detect and deter traffickers and prevent the victimization of illegal entrants at the hands of smugglers.

In 2017 alone, deputies deployed 400 times, conducted 4,794 traffic stops, and made 312 misdemeanor arrests and 164 felony arrests. Deputies made 67 narcotic seizures totaling 4,281

pounds of marijuana, 81 pounds of methamphetamine, and 91 pounds of cocaine. As part of their investigations, deputies also recovered 17 stolen vehicles, seized 19 illegal weapons, and 71 vehicles used in illegal activities.

In the past three years, OPSG grants have also funded more than \$700,000 in equipment purchases, including aircraft upgrades, surveillance equipment, communications equipment, and off-road utility vehicles. This equipment is used during OPSG operations, but is also regularly used during daily operations at the Sheriff's Department, further supporting our Department mission.

In summary, Operation Stonegarden has provided a funding stream for both law enforcement operations and equipment for more than a decade. In the past three years, more than \$3.3 million federal dollars have been provided to fund operations that provide a direct benefit to the citizens of Pima County, particularly those in rural and remote areas. More than \$700,000 in equipment purchases have been made, most of which would not be obtainable without this valuable grant program. I urge you, and your fellow Board members, to place this item on a future agenda for reconsideration. My staff will be available to provide any additional information you feel is important for the discussion. Please contact Chief Karl Woolridge at (520) 351-6204 or karl.woolridge@sheriff.pima.gov for assistance.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention.