

The Constitution guarantees Americans the right to be secure against all unreasonable seizures. My home state of Texas is unfortunately planning on some very unreasonable seizures of land with the monstrous Trans Texas Corridor highway project. The TTC plans call for a highway to cut through about 4,000 Texas miles, and with separate rail lines for passenger and freight, a multi-lane highway with separate truck lanes, utility and cable easements, this highway could be as wide as 1200 feet across. In the end this project would consume something like half a million acres of land in Texas. However, since the exact path of the road has not been determined, it is putting much more acreage in jeopardy, and in limbo. Taking land is destructive enough. But the perpetual threat of taking an undetermined amount of land is hanging over the heads of millions of Texans and putting their lives at a standstill.

Land is a store of wealth and a source of stability. This highway project is tragically threatening that for so many Texans. The principle of private property is the cornerstone to a free and prosperous society. In situations where a colossal government land grab is a distinct possibility, investment or improvement becomes more risky with an uncertain future and tends not to happen. How do you sell land that may or may not be taken by the government at some point in the not too distant future? Who would buy it? How do you cultivate or build on, or even near, land that may or may not be paved over and turned into a massive, noisy thoroughfare in a few years? Even more insulting is the distinct possibility that, while the road will collect tolls and fees, making a private foreign firm billions of dollars in revenue, the costs of building it could be heavily borne by taxpayers. So the costs will be socialized and the profits privatized.

Public-private partnership indeed! From Washington I have voiced my staunch disapproval of taking these hard-working taxpayers' land for a private toll road, by introducing legislation (HR 5191) that simply states, "No Federal funds appropriated or made available before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act may be used by a unit of Federal, State, or local government to carry out the highway project known as the 'Trans-Texas Corridor'." I am working hard in Congress to make sure that no Federal funding is used to undermine property rights in this way.

We should be focusing on guarding and securing our borders for the protection of the American people. Instead we are paving the way for more and more people to cross the border as comfortably as possible. And taking the family farm to do it. It is an absolute outrage.