

MAC THORNBERRY
13TH DISTRICT
TEXAS



ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
VICE CHAIR

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
January 30, 2014

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
EMERGENCY THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
CHAIRMAN

PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Oklahoma Field Office RMP Comments
c/o Larry Levesque
Bureau of Land Management - Oklahoma Field Office
7906 E. 33rd Street, Suite 101
Tulsa, OK 74145-1352

To Whom It May Concern:

I am submitting comments on behalf of several constituents in my district to express concerns about the proposed survey to be conducted along the Red River that spans Wilbarger, Wichita, and Clay Counties in Texas.

During a public meeting in Wichita Falls, Texas, several landowners were informed of potential BLM plans to conduct a cadastral survey along a 116 mile stretch of the Red River, which creates the border between Oklahoma and Texas, to determine what area may or may not be under federal control. Potential BLM plans discussed for this land included opening up the land for public access for recreation, hunting, and general management. There has even been discussion of extending public hunting access within 3 miles south of the Texas-Oklahoma border.

Most, if not all, of the current landowners, the county governments, and I are opposed to any expansion of control or management from BLM over lands on the Texas side of the border. Although BLM currently manages public and tribal lands in Oklahoma, we believe that BLM has no federal claim to land on the Texas side of the border along the 116 mile stretch of the Red River, especially any that are further south of the southern bank of the river.

As you are aware, the BLM currently has on file numerous cadastral surveys, some completed as recently as 2008, from the adjacent counties on the Oklahoma side of the river that delineates the Oklahoma-Texas border pursuant to the 1924 Supreme Court decision. Several of these cadastral surveys completed in 2008 echo the same language verbatim that "the gradient boundary monumented and described within has not been changed since it was established and declared to be the true boundary by the Supreme Court on June 9, 1924." Additionally, H.J. Res. 72, which was signed into federal law on October 10, 2000, ratifies the Red River Boundary Compact agreed upon by the states that sets the Red River boundary at the vegetation line on the south bank.

Both of these items reinforce that the BLM has not and should not have any legitimate claim to private land on the Texas side of the border that extends any further than the gradient boundary and/or the vegetation line on the south bank of the river. It is also evident that if BLM already has on file recently completed cadastral surveys, that there would be no reason to believe that the boundary should be extended any further south onto private lands in Texas.

On behalf of the landowners, county governments, and constituents in Texas, I ask that the BLM take no action that would expand the management or control of any land south of the Texas-Oklahoma border.

Sincerely,

Mac Thornberry
Member of Congress