

**Joint Communiqué**  
**U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program: Border 2012**  
**The 2011 National Coordinators Meeting**

We, the National Coordinators of the U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program: Border 2012 convened our Seventh meeting on May 9-11, 2011, in San Antonio, Texas, to renew our bi-national partnership, celebrate many tangible successes, and identify key actions to achieving Border 2012 goals and objectives. We are delighted to continue to strengthen our partnership and collaboration with the ten Border States, 26 U.S. Border Tribes and Indigenous Communities, local governments, industry and the public.

As the Border 2012 Program nears its completion, we have redoubled our efforts to make sure that the Border 2012 goals are met in an efficient and effective way, while supporting the work and recommendations of the Policy Forums and Regional Workgroups (and their respective Task Forces) to successfully complete the Border 2012 Program.

In addition, we are shifting our energy and focus towards the development of the Next Bi-national Agreement. In doing so, we have held several thematic meetings, for the Program's Policy Forums and Regional Workgroups, to openly discuss and analyze the different strategies and actions for the fulfillment of the Border 2012 Program short term commitments and to define the Next Program's priorities. Today, we discussed some of these recommended actions and priorities and got input from our partners and stakeholders on others that need to be explored and considered as well. The border region has served as a model of cooperation before and we're confident that through this new agreement, it will continue to be a thriving example for other countries to observe and consider.

As in previous years, the Border 2012 program has made important advances in the conservation and sustainability of the region. Among them are:

**Reduce Water Contamination**

We continue working to improve water quality in the border region. These improvements result from the elimination of raw sewage discharges into water bodies shared by U.S. and Mexico. Key successes include the opening of the Wastewater Treatment Plant "La Morita" in Tijuana, Baja California, which will allow the cleanup of "El Matanuco" stream, a tributary of the Tijuana River, restoring the ecosystem balance of the border region Tijuana-San Diego and benefiting a population of about 251,017 people.

We acknowledge the Border Environment Infrastructure Program (BEIF) construction of several projects that modernize the drinking water and sewage systems in the cities of Nogales and San Luis Río Colorado; Sonora; Playas de Rosarito and Tijuana, Baja California; Guadalupe, Anapra, El Porvenir, Chihuahua; Douglas, Arizona; Nuevo Laredo and Miguel Alemán, Tamaulipas; Piedras Negras, Coahuila; La Feria, Eagle Pass; and Donna, Texas. Specific constructed components included: wastewater lift stations, water transmission lines, wastewater collectors, wastewater force mains, and wastewater treatment plants.

We initiated through the Border Infrastructure Program the development and construction of several other water and wastewater projects. Some of the cities that will benefit from these projects are Tijuana, Baja California; Sonoyta, San Luis Río Colorado and Nogales, Sonora; Ciudad Juárez and El Millón, Chihuahua; Ciudad Mier, Reynosa and Río Bravo, Tamaulipas; and Clint and Fabens, Texas.

We assisted the Arizona Department of Water Resources with \$39,430 from the Border 2012 Program, to install a stream gauge on the Nogales Wash. The gauge provides Internet-accessible, real-time flow data

ensuring adequate response to Sanitary Sewer Overflows, reducing the potential for disease and unsanitary conditions in Ambos Nogales.

### **Reduce Air Pollution**

We recognize the hard work of the Air Policy Forum and the Regional Workgroups in addressing issues related to climate change in the border region. In its 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the Air Policy Forum presented a bi-national mitigation strategy, with proposals for more efficient energy use and the reduction of emissions generated by fossil fuels.

We thank the Center for Climate Strategies for cooperating with the six Mexican Border States in the development and completion of the Green House Gas Inventories (GHG), as well as the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the National Institute of Ecology (INE) for coordinating and supervising those tasks. Also, we acknowledge the effort these three Organizations and the six Mexican states are making to begin the drafting of the State Climate Action Plans.

We keep addressing the issues related with air quality by implementing projects in the framework of the *Transporte Limpio Program*, in Tijuana, Baja California; Nogales, Sonora; and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Those projects will show the efficiency of the technologies and fuel conservation strategies of the *Transporte Limpio Program*, lower the fuel consumption and reduce the emission of GHGs and criteria pollutants (NOx and PM) as well as reducing transportation operation costs.

We praise the completion of the Air Emissions Inventory for the cities of Tijuana and Playas de Rosarito, Baja California; and the Baja California Air Quality Monitoring Network Evaluation Inventory, with the support of US EPA Region 9, SEMARNAT, BECC and the state's Environmental Protection Secretariat. The information gathered will help the decision making and the understanding and prediction of the negative effects of pollution in the bi national air shed.

### **Reducing Land Contamination**

We acknowledge the ongoing efforts to reduce land contamination with the construction of hazardous material infrastructure. The Mexican side includes a total of 40 sites including landfills and co-processing centers, recycling and treatment centers.

We keep working to implement the Scrap Tire Cleanup Program Framework with the support of the Federal and State Government and the private sector. This year SEMARNAT authorized the financing of a \$200,000 Mexican pesos project in the city of Nuevo Laredo to move 150,000 tires from the Scrap Tire Integral Management Center (*Centro Integral para el Manejo de Lantas de Desecho in Spanish*) to a CEMEX factory in Monterrey, Nuevo León.

We also keep promoting the efforts for small scrap tire piles clean-ups. During 2010 the state of Baja California completed the cleanup of 11 sites, including two of the three major scrap tire piles in the border region in 2007. Similarly a landmark that is noteworthy, particularly in the rural areas is the enrollments to the Scrap Tire Management Initiative by signing the letter of intent of the municipalities of Ascension and Janos, Chihuahua; the Village of Columbus, New Mexico; and the signing of Ojinaga, Chihuahua, today.

We completed the Border 2012 Park in Tijuana, Baja California, with the support of \$50,000 from the Border 2012 Program. Pervious pavement and over 10,000 used tires were used to construct a structure from which to view soccer games and cultural events. These construction practices serve to demonstrate to the local community methods that reduce erosion.

We recognize the importance of environmental education projects like the one promoted by the Work Group Amistad, named "Reciclaje Electrónico" (E-Waste, its name in English) working to raise awareness about recycling and final disposition of electronics among the students at all levels in schools in Piedras Negras-Eagle Pass.

#### **Improving Environmental Health**

We have been very successful in efforts to educate and train families and agricultural workers in the safe and proper means to reduce their exposures to pesticides and other chemicals, as well as training professionals on environmental health issues. Efforts are underway to pilot the use of lower risk agricultural pesticides and harmonize a bi-national system for reporting acute poisoning from pesticides. We continue to reduce the risk of poisoning from exposure to caustic cleaners and pesticides by changing patterns of behavior and creating healthier home environments in rural communities.

We continue evaluating the relationship between the use of sewage for irrigation and the prevalence of gastrointestinal diseases in the population with the completion of a case study in 2010 in Valle de Juarez, Chihuahua. Based on education and environmental health indicators, intervention programs are being delivered in rural communities along the border.

#### **Enhance Joint Readiness for Environmental Response**

We keep evaluating and implementing the emergency notification system for the U.S. and Mexico. In 2010 the U.S. National Response Center (NRC) reported 504 emergencies to PROFEPA's Orientation Center for Environmental Emergencies Attention Center (COATEA, by its acronym in spanish) as well as to the National Communications Center (CENACOM, by its acronym in spanish), a division of the National Service of Civil Protection (SINAPROC, by its acronym in spanish) of the Mexico's Ministry of Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación). Mexico, through CENACOM, has reported to NRC a total of 19 emergencies.

We completed the "*Emergencias Químicas Ocurridas y Reportadas a la PROFEPA en los Estados Fronterizos, Franja Fronteriza, Franja Colindante y Ciudades Hermanas de México con los Estados Unidos (2000-2008)*" Report, with information about chemical emergencies in the mentioned areas. This is an important tool for prevention, preparedness and response to this type of emergencies.

We funded and executed through EPA's current inter-agency agreement with DOD's North-Com, several events providing capacity building activities such as making available adequate emergency response equipment to Mexican responders and related training, planning of exercises, seminars, and visits to various border meetings. Emergency response equipment has been donated to the cities of Tijuana and Mexicali, Baja California; Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila; Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua; San Luis Río Colorado and Nogales, Sonora; and trained the personnel operating the equipment. Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo y Matamoros, Tamaulipas, will also receive hazardous materials handling equipment as well as training.

We are working to develop training mechanisms for incident command system and exercise design and planning outreach materials as well as studying emergency team certification mechanisms to assure a better emergency response and to minimize the impact to the population and the environment.

#### **Commitment to Improving Environmental Performance**

We keep promoting the adoption of voluntary programs for the prevention of pollution originated by industry and other sectors. In doing so, we keep promoting the *Auditoria Ambiental Program* in the Mexican border, and publishing the new regulations for environmental auditing to facilitate the registration process for volunteers willing to participate.

We keep working in control and vigilance of activities in the border region, having as a priority those focused in diminishing the impact to human health and the environment by timely follow up to activities previously audited, using law regulations to correct irregularities.

We also celebrate the development and completion of the *2010 State of the Border Indicators Report* presented at today's meeting. This Report builds on the flagship *2005 State of the Border Region* report and it updates many of the indicators first reported on 2005. Also, it adds new indicators and includes place-specific highlights that could become border-wide indicators in the future. The development of the 2010 report helps ensure that Border 2012 can demonstrate progress toward meeting the program's ambitious binational goals and objectives.

We congratulate our partners, stakeholders, and participants who have contributed to the Border 2012 Program's success and accomplishments during the last two years and invite them to redouble the efforts to assure the fulfillment of each and every one of the Border 2012 Program goals.

We hope you will participate in the National Coordinators Meeting in 2012, in which the final results of the Border 2012 Program will be presented and the successful bi-national cooperation framework will be officially adjourned.



**Michelle DePass**  
**National Coordinator for the U.S.**



**Enrique Lendo**  
**National Coordinator for México**

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