

Joint Communiqué
U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Program
The 2005 National Coordinators Meeting

We, the National Coordinators of Border 2012, the United States-Mexico Environmental Program, convened our second meeting on March 8 – 10, 2005, in the city of Tucson, Arizona where we renewed our commitment to the Border 2012 goals and objectives, reviewed our progress, and set directions for 2006.

Recognizing the value of cleaner air, purer water and the proper disposal of solid and hazardous waste, our partners representing Federal, State, local government, U.S. and Mexican Indigenous Peoples, and non-governmental entities addressed the critical challenges that face the population along the shared 2,000 mile border.

The meeting resulted in a shared understanding of environmental accomplishments to date, and the priority actions needed in upcoming years to address environmental and human health concerns.

We recognize the efforts made by El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, and Doña Ana County in moving towards meeting air quality standards for all pollutants. We also acknowledge the joint efforts of Federal and State authorities in California and Baja California for beginning in 2004 the transfer of the management of 13 monitoring stations from U.S. agencies into the control of Mexican authorities in Mexicali, Tijuana and Playas de Rosarito. More air monitoring networks remain a target in the near future for other cities along the border. In addition, a complementary set of pilot projects are increasing our understanding of the emission impacts from cross-border commercial truck traffic as well as the capabilities of various portable exhaust testing devices. Diesel retrofit projects on the border will demonstrate the effectiveness of using ultra low sulfur diesel fuel thus promoting the use of the next generation of cleaner diesel engines. Authorities in both countries have also acknowledged that due to the rapidly increasing vehicle fleets in border cities, a vehicular emission control program will be vital to the long term strategy of emission reduction in the border.

We reaffirm our commitment to provide safe drinking water and sanitation to protect and improve public health and the environment for border communities. In 2003 and 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency provided 95 million dollars in grant funds through the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and North American Development Bank for critical safe drinking water and sanitation projects benefiting over 1 million border residents. The total cost for these projects was 242 million dollars. Matching funds were provided for Mexican projects by SEMARNAT through its National Water Commission (CNA). We have established a new prioritization system to ensure the projects addressing the most critical human health risks are funded first.

We recognize the challenge posed by waste along the border and the accomplishments have been significant. Approximately 281,000 scrap tires were removed from abandoned tire pile sites in Mexicali, Tijuana, and Ciudad Juarez and were used as fuel in cement plants. We explored viable alternatives to using scrap tires as fuel, by demonstrating the use of scrap tires as road

surface. We commit to explore funding options to remove more tires from tire piles and put them to productive use.

We continue to support the effort for removal and disposal of 1,500 tons of hazardous waste from the Metales y Derivados site, an abandoned secondary lead smelter and battery recycling facility in Tijuana. Federal, state and local authorities in both countries have invested more than 600,000 dollars toward this effort. We remain committed to the clean up of the Metales y Derivados site, as funds become available. We further believe that our experience with this site encourages remediation of other sites as they become imminent threats to public health, teaming up with local and state authorities and managing the task with complete disclosure to the affected communities.

We endorse the work of the Border 2012 Environmental Health Workgroup in forming an alliance with the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission thereby targeting resources and improving collaboration among environmental health agencies at all levels of government in both countries.


We also endorse the expansion of the Border Compliance Assistance Center which will strengthen compliance at U.S.-Mexico Ports-of-Entry, improve compliance by expanding pollution prevention and environmental management systems, and utilize data to identify areas where regulated facilities with high emissions of toxic substances pose the greatest potential for harm to the surrounding community.

We are committed to preventing environmental accidents, and where accidents happen, preventing the worst consequences from becoming reality. In the last year, first responders have received training and conducted exercises to prepare for and manage chemical accidents and respond to international terrorism.

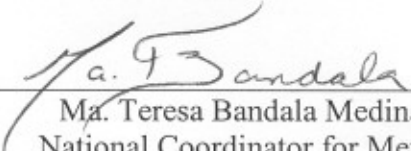
As we move forward, our immediate priorities are:

- Increasing access to and improving safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure
- Retrofitting diesel buses and trucks and improving availability of low sulfur diesel fuel on the border
- Implementing a demonstration project for the binational clean-up and restoration of abandoned sites contaminated with hazardous waste materials
- Cleaning up existing tire piles
- Promoting financing mechanisms for landfill projects relating to the Methane to Markets initiative

We have important work in the future and are confident that with the collaboration of our partners and with more transparency and accountability, we will be able to contribute to a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable border environment for future generations.



Jerry Clifford
National Coordinator for the United States



Ma. Teresa Bandala Medina
National Coordinator for Mexico

March 10, 2005