

Joint Communiqué
U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program: Border 2012
The 2009 National Coordinators Meeting

We, the National Coordinators of the U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program: Border 2012, convened our sixth meeting on October 27-29, 2009, in Valley Center, California, where we renewed our binational partnership, celebrated our tangible successes, and identified key actions toward achieving Border 2012 objectives. We are delighted to continue to strengthen our partnership and collaboration with the ten border states, tribes, local governments, industry and the public. This year's meeting was the first to be held on tribal lands. We would like to extend thanks to the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians for providing a meeting place where our collaborative work could continue.

We recognize that tribal nations and indigenous communities along the U.S.-Mexico border face critical challenges in addressing the issues of clean air, clean water, and the proper disposal of solid and hazardous wastes. The need for resources is evident in the \$9.8 million in project requests received in FY 2009 for the U.S. EPA's Tribal Border Water Infrastructure Program. We gladly announce that four tribal water projects were funded with the \$1M that was available and celebrate this year's completion of a 112,000-gallon water storage tank constructed with \$491,000 of EPA Tribal Border Water Infrastructure funding to serve the Campo Band of Mission Indians.

Reducing Water Contamination

We celebrate new Border 2012 demonstration projects, including storm-water detention structures in Nogales, Sonora; designed wetlands in Mexicali and Tecate; and a pilot rain harvesting system and composting toilets in the Arizona/Sonora region. All will reduce water contamination from sewage, and each provides added benefits through improved flood control, water conservation, or riparian habitat value.

We continue to address water and sanitation needs through the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) and Project Development Assistance Program (PDAP), which have been instrumental in improving the quality of life in communities along the border. In FY 2009, BEIF funding helped to complete 13 projects, which provide wastewater and drinking water service for over 370,000 people in border communities and benefit the communities of Playas de Rosarito (Baja California); Somerton and Nogales (Arizona); Agua Prieta (Sonora); Santa Rosa, Tornillo, Roma, and San Benito (Texas); Lordsburg (New Mexico); and Ojinaga, Anapra, Guadalupe Bravos and Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua). Also in 2009, EPA's Region 6 and Region 9 offices, in partnership with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), completed a project prioritization process that evaluated 209 grant applications from border communities with a total construction need of over \$1.1 billion. From among the highest priority projects, 26 received grant support for planning and design in 2009.

Reducing Air Pollution

We commend the Air Policy Forum and the BECC for hosting a Climate Change Workshop in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, in April 2010. This successful workshop brought together representatives from each of the border states and from the energy sector and integrated new partners such as the state energy ministries/departments. In preparation for this workshop, the U.S.-Mexico *Border Greenhouse Gas Inventories and Policy* report was produced, which provides a baseline on greenhouse gas (GHG) activities in the border region. Also recently completed was the *Truck Stop Electrification and Anti-Idling as a Diesel Emissions Reduction Strategy at U.S.-Mexico Ports of Entry* report. This report identifies strategies for reducing emissions from idling trucks as they wait at border ports of entry.

We celebrate the coordination and recent development of activities and projects to mitigate climate change, which is one of the first initiatives taken from the Border States Workshop in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, of April 2009. The workshop established objectives such as the exchange of information on GHG emissions, the development of inventories within the Mexican border states, the proposal of new mandatory reporting on GHG emissions within the United States, and the development of climate policies in Mexico. Other new objectives included sharing information and ideas on (a) the development of clean energy, projects in energy efficiency, and the reduction of GHG within the border states, and (b) current market initiatives within the United States and practical information regarding financial tools and mechanisms for projects.

We commend the more than 125 technicians who received training on operating air quality monitoring equipment and stations in a series of workshops and training sessions held in seven Mexican border cities in FY 2008-09. The sessions were held in the cities of Matamoros and Reynosa in Tamaulipas; Ojinaga, Ciudad Juarez and Palomas in Chihuahua; and Mexicali and Tijuana in Baja California. Experts from the California, New Mexico and Texas environment departments or commissions (CARB, TCEQ and NMED), plus U.S. EPA and Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Ecologia (INE; part of SEMARNAT), coordinated and carried out the workshops.

We recognize successful efforts to retrofit old diesel vehicle engines with cleaner burning engines that operate on both sides of the border. The San Diego Air Pollution Control District retrofitted 10 Tijuana drayage trucks, and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality helped retrofit 37 school buses and 55 large cargo trucks.

We recognize the binational effort between state and federal agencies that culminated in an emissions inventory in Spring 2009 for the entire municipality of Mexicali, Baja California. Participating in the inventory development were U.S. EPA, SEMARNAT, the State of Baja California Secretariat for the Environment, and the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The effort updates previous inventories developed for Mexicali for the year 1996 and 1999. The emissions inventory will be used to prepare a plan (*Pro Aire*) that will identify actions needed to reduce air emissions in Mexicali. An emissions inventory for the cities of Tijuana and Rosarito, under the joint direction of the same participants, has just been initiated and will be completed in summer 2010, with a *Pro Aire* planned following completion of the emissions inventory. Finally, a complete review of the existing air quality monitoring network in northern Baja California will begin this fall to determine whether the number and location of the current network stations are still appropriate for the region. In the near future, we will continue to support the emissions inventory for Tijuana-Rosarito, while at the same time we acknowledge the evaluation of the air monitoring network of Baja California.

Reducing Land Contamination

We recognize Metales y Derivados as the first completed cleanup under Mexico's new cleanup law and under Border 2012's Goal 3, Sub-Objective 4A. Metales y Derivados was a lead smelting facility that began operations in the late 1980s, was cited by Mexico's Attorney General for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA) for environmental non-compliance, and was abandoned by its U.S. owner in 1994. In 2004, a binational partnership workgroup, established through the Border 2012 program, implemented a four-phase cleanup plan that included the removal of over 42,000 tons of high-risk wastes and the recent construction of a concrete cap.

We support border states, municipalities and the tire industry in their Tire Initiative Collaborative Effort. The purpose of the Collaborative Effort is to increase awareness and understanding of the U.S.-Mexico Scrap Tire Integrated Management Initiative, a binational scrap tire management framework. Collaboration is an essential ingredient needed for solving the binational scrap tire problem. The borderwide Scrap Tire Initiative Implementation Workgroup has been formed to enhance communication among stakeholders.

We recognize the importance of continuing to participate and collaborate with the Border Legislative Conference to develop and solidify a legislative framework for both sides of the border, as well as to address the management of scrap tires in Mexico and United States.

Thanks to the strong support of SEMARNAT's Tamaulipas delegation, EPA and COCEF have continued to hold hazardous waste collection events, following an initial event in August 2008, which collect materials that cannot be landfilled. These collection events have achieved notable results, including the collection of 12,010 liters (L) of used oil, 4,461 L of oil-mixed water, 768 kg of mud containing hydrocarbon, and 2,150 used batteries.

Improving Environmental Health

We celebrate the expansion of the Joint Train-the-Trainer Workshop for pesticide educators in California, Arizona, Mexico and tribal communities. Following successful workshops in San Marcos, CA, and Yuma, AZ, a workshop was held in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora. This was the first workshop held in México and was only offered in Spanish. Participants were trained in effective training techniques, identifying potential health effects resulting from pesticide exposure, and the proper selection, use, and donning of personal protective equipment.

We recognize the Texas A&M Health Science Center in McAllen, Texas, which hosted a series of environmental health education workshops for physicians, nurses, *promotoras*, school health professionals, asthma patients, families, and farm workers. The goal of this effort was to reduce asthma health care encounters, increase the number of symptom-free days for asthmatic individuals, and to decrease pesticide exposure inside and outside households. A variety of training curricula and tools are being utilized to promote asthma health education. For the younger population, an educational DVD entitled "*A is for Asthma with Elmo*" is being utilized to educate pre-school through second graders about asthma and what to do in case of an asthma episode, as explained by Sesame Street characters. The workshops were supported by funding from EPA's Border 2012 program and the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Enhancing Joint Readiness for Environmental Response

We celebrate another successful U.S. Joint Response Team meeting on Sept. 1, 2009, in South Padre Island, Texas. Attendees included representatives from U.S. and Mexican federal, state and local agencies responsible for emergency prevention, preparedness and response in the border region. Tremendous groundwork and logistical planning resulted in a successful and well received meeting with more than 100 participants. Agenda topics included discussions of ongoing initiatives, recent accomplishments and lessons learned, training, and exercises, as well as the upcoming priorities and projects for 2009-2010 fiscal years. The meeting also included discussion of cross-border collaborations, increased preparedness and risk reduction activities.

We recognize that equipment transfers and accompanying hazardous materials response training continue to be part of a binational readiness initiative involving the U.S. EPA, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), PROFEPA, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Mexico's Civil Protection Agency (Proteccion Civil), and the U.S.-Mexico Border Governors Emergency Management and Civil Protection Worktable.

We celebrate completion of the first Binational Emergency Exercise between the rural areas of Columbus, New Mexico, and Palomas, Chihuahua, which took place in September 2008. The two towns involved in the exercise signed a sister-city contingency plan in November 2004.

We commend the successful completion of the 2009 inaugural hazmat trainings and the equipment transfers to Tijuana, Nogales, Mexicali, San Luis Rio Colorado, Ciudad Juarez, and Acuña and anticipate the completion of additional equipment transfers and trainings planned for 2010.

We recognize the renewed commitment by the communities of El Paso (Texas), Municipality of Juarez (Chihuahua), and Sunland Park (New Mexico), which updated their 2007 *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cross Border Communications and Emergency Response Strategies: Binational Hazardous Materials Emergency Plan*. The 2009 update to the plan incorporated the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo into the sister-city plan. It also marks the first agreement across the New Mexico–Texas–Chihuahua border that officially incorporates a Native American tribe, reinforcing the cooperation among the four jurisdictions.

Commitment to Improving Environmental Performance

We recognize the important role of Environmental Management Systems training in Mexicali in improving environmental performance by reducing the use of water, energy consumption, waste and wastewater generation, VOC use, and the increase of on-site solid-waste recycling. These efforts have proven to be an effective way to achieve environmental gains while providing cost savings. Improvements include a 95% reduction of wastewater generation, an 83% reduction in solid waste generation, a 77% reduction in electricity use, and a 50% reduction in water use.

We celebrate the publication of the 2007 Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) data for the U.S. border region. This is the first occasion that this information has been made available on a borderwide level on the U.S. side. Publication of these data reflects communities' right to know about toxic chemicals being released into the environment and provides an important baseline for focusing binational environmental efforts.

We continue to support the collaboration between Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the California/Baja California Waste and Enforcement Task Force. CBP participation has strengthened information sharing between participating agencies and is critical to addressing illegal waste crossing between the U.S. and Mexico. This collaboration has facilitated communications between CBP and California state agencies and their Mexican counterparts in Baja California.

Enhancing Borderwide Accountability and Measures of Success via Environmental Indicators

We support the Border Indicators Task Force as it develops a successor border indicators report in 2010. Building on the *State of the Border Region* report released in 2007, the Task Force is working to update the report's existing indicators. It is also working to identify and develop new indicators that address current Border 2012 priorities and that clarify future border needs. We also encourage the Task Force to continue developing border case studies within its upcoming report, which will highlight key state and tribal projects, identify promising opportunities for future indicator development, and support Border 2012's bottom-up approach.

We also celebrate the development and launch of EPA's Border Project Tracker, conceived and built by the Border Indicators Task Force in collaboration with key Border 2012 partners. The Project Tracker will further ensure that Border 2012 achieves concrete and measurable results and demonstrates accountability and transparency in its project activities.

Key areas of upcoming work will include:

- Increasing access to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure;
- Building GHG information capacity and piloting projects to reduce GHG emissions, including Climate Action Planning Projects in Sonora and Baja California to foster the states' capability to implement climate mitigation and adaptation measures;
- Developing institutional capacity to manage electronic waste and used oil;
- Piloting projects that reduce exposure to obsolete agricultural pesticides;
- Conducting binational emergency preparedness training and exercises at sister cities; and
- Utilizing the Toxics Release Inventory and Pollutant Release and Transfer Register tools to collect and report on toxic releases, and to better assist border industry in its efforts to go above and beyond compliance.
- Setting the stage for the next bi-national border program, under the framework of La Paz Agreement signed between Mexico and the United States in 1983.

We congratulate the Border 2012 participants on the impressive accomplishments that have been achieved to date. We also commit to continuing this innovative, collaborative approach and to achieving the strengthened goals outlined in the Border 2012 Mid-Course Refinement document.

We look forward to seeing you at our next National Coordinators Meeting in 2010.



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November 2009.