

Meeting of the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup of the U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program: Border 2020

On December 4, the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup convened in Rio Rico, Arizona to discuss the following:

- *Finalize the 2013-2014 Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup Action Plan and draft a new one for 2015-2016*
- *Provide an overview of mining issues in the Arizona/Sonora border region and best management practices*
- *Convene Task Force meetings to discuss air, water, waste, and emergency preparedness and response issues and priorities*

Plenary Session

The December 4th meeting was led by the Co-Chairs of the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup represented by Amanda Stone of the Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Frances Schultz of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Oscar Tellez Leyva of Sonora's Commission of Ecology and Sustainable Development (CEDES), and Jorge Andres Suilo Orozco of Mexico's Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). The event was moderated by EPA's Lorena Lopez-Powers, Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup Coordinator.

Electronic e-waste Recycling Project - Amanda Stone, Director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Southern Regional Office, announced the launch of an electronic e-waste recycling tool and collection efforts in the Arizona border region. This project was awarded to ADEQ through the Border 2020 Program earlier this year. The project is expected to divert over 100,000 pounds of e-waste from landfills in the border region and help develop capacity in border cities to conduct their own e-waste collection events. The web-based toolkit will provide border cities with a valuable resource on best practices on collection events and is available on ADEQ's website: <http://www.azdeq.gov/>

Regional Mining Presentation and Workshops - The Regional Workgroup Co-Chairs announced two future workshops on mining issues in the Arizona/Sonora border region. The goal of the workshops is to develop capacity on mining best practices, technologies, regulations, cleanup, and emergency preparedness. Participants are expected to include government, industry, academic and other stakeholders from both countries to facilitate cross-cutting information sharing on mines in operation, proposed new mines, and those that are closed or abandoned. Mining is a topic that cuts across all five of the Border 2020 Goals.

Emergency Response Equipment Exchange - During the plenary session, Ray Sayre, Director, Santa Cruz County office of Emergency Management, donated radiation

monitoring equipment (provided by the State of Arizona) to their Mexican counterparts.

Border 2020 Update - Tomas Torres, Director of EPA's Border Office in San Diego, California and Border 2020 Program Coordinator, presented an overview and status report on the Border 2020 Program. He emphasized the importance of the two-year action plans in prioritizing projects and resources, and announced plans for a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early 2015. Border 2020 projects are required to meet the following criteria:

1. Fulfill an unmet Objective in Border 2020
2. Demonstrate measurable environmental outcomes/impacts
3. Include non - Border 2020 resources (leveraging)
4. Include benefits in the U.S. if the project occurs in Sonora.
5. Demonstrate project sustainability beyond Border 2020 funding

Task Force Highlights

The afternoon included concurrent meetings of the air, water, and waste and enforcement Task Forces of the Regional Workgroup. The sessions focused on finalizing the 2013/2014 Action Plans and developing the 2015/2016 Action Plans. The Action Plans identify projects conducted by Border 2020 partners to fulfill Border 2020 goals and objectives, track project outcomes, and provide information to inform future priorities.

Air Task Force - During the Air Task Force, Dzoara Tejada, from LT consulting, presented results of the Emissions Inventory for the city of Nogales, Sonora. The Emissions Inventory was developed under a Border 2020 grant administered by BECC to Tijuana Calidad de Vida and includes the participation of Sonora's State University (Universidad Estatal de Sonora). A key finding is that the major sources of particulate matter are roads (paved and unpaved) and wildfires. Results from the Emissions Inventory may help inform a future *Pro Aire* for Nogales, Sonora.

Water Task Force - Roberto Molina and Briselda Duarte of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) provided an update of existing water and wastewater infrastructure projects, and ADEQ representatives discussed activities to be considered in development of the Action Plan. The International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC) provided an update on the binational project efforts undertaken by the Arizona-Sonora Binational Technical Committee.

Waste and Enforcement Task Force - ADEQ provided an overview of the new e-waste toolkit which provides guidance to assist border cities and municipalities in planning and conducting e-waste collection events. The toolkit is available in English and Spanish on ADEQ's website. Nine collection events are planned, at no cost, in several border communities including: Douglas, Bisbee, Nogales, Patagonia, Sahuarito, and Yuma, Arizona. For more information visit:

<http://www.azdeq.gov/function/news/2014/download/120414.pdf>

Other topics included recommendations on new project ideas to implement in Arizona / Sonora, including the recovery of edible food, currently being sent to compost,

developing further capacity for recycling, and deterring the illegal dumping of various waste streams, including tires.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force - The Task Force met on December 3. Co-Chairs, Les Caid, from the Rio Rico, Arizona Fire District and Carlos Arias, from Sonora's Civil Protection Agency provided a summary of the Task Force accomplishments and priorities. Key priorities included a commitment to continue updating the binational Sister City Emergency Response plans, facilitate enhanced communication, foster equipment exchanges and promote training and exercises. The Task Force also shared highlights of an equipment exchange that provided personal protective equipment (firefighting boots) to Mexican bomberos through a partnership between EPA, NORTHCOM, and Mexican counterparts.