



# Border 2020 Newsletter

## Region 9

California, Baja California, Arizona and Sonora  
Fall 2015



[www2.epa.gov/border2020](http://www2.epa.gov/border2020)

*This newsletter provides a summary of activities that took place from July through September 2015.*

## General Updates

**U.S.-Mexico Border Program Awards Eleven New Projects.** The U.S.-Mexico Border Program has awarded eleven new projects in Region 9 valued at \$660,000, leveraging an additional \$328,000 in external funding from those organizations. Projects include the identification of emission reduction measures and actions in Nogales, Sonora; evaluation of environmental health status along the Arizona-Sonora border; and an “ocean friendly” restaurants campaign in the Tijuana/San Diego Region, among others. The eleven new projects were awarded following a review of 51 proposals received in response to an RFP issued on April 13th. The projects help to fulfill binational commitments identified within the U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 Program. For more information, please visit [www.cocef.org](http://www.cocef.org) or contact Lorena Lopez-Powers at [lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov](mailto:lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov).

**National Coordinators Convene in El Paso, Texas.** The National Coordinators of the U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 Program met on September 21-23 in El Paso, Texas. The First National Coordinators Public Meeting (NCM) under the new Border 2020 Program convened representatives of the ten U.S. and Mexican border states to present the program’s achievements and advancements; evaluate its goals, objectives, and operation; and identify key actions required to enhance it. These were the main objectives of the binational meeting chaired by U.S. National Coordinator Jane Nishida (EPA) and Mexican National Coordinator Enrique Lendo-Fuentes (SEMARNAT), who addressed the participants with some welcoming remarks. Coordinators reviewed 2015-2016 Action Plans,



collaborative agreements, and the creation of environmental indicators; thus confirming both specific commitments and general opportunities to work together in the implementation of the Program. The national coordinators will next convene in 2017 in Baja California. For a complete summary of the NCM and copy of the Joint Communique, please see [Border 2020 website](http://border2020.epa.gov) and/or contact Lorena Lopez-Powers at [lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov](mailto:lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov).

**Tomás Torres Selected to Head EPA Region 9 Water Division.** Tomás Torres has been selected as the new director of EPA Region 9’s Water Division. He had previously served as director of the San Diego Border Office since 2003. Tomás joined EPA in 1991 after earning a B.S. in environmental science from U.C. Berkeley and worked as an environmental scientist in the RCRA program, a remedial project manager in the Superfund Division, and then as Region 9 U.S.-Mexico Hazardous Waste Coordinator. Bridget Coyle is serving as the acting director of the San Diego Border Office until the role is filled in early 2016. Contact Bridget Coyle at [coyle.bridget@epa.gov](mailto:coyle.bridget@epa.gov).



## Goal Updates

### Goal 1 – Reduce Air Pollution

**Imperial County Air Pollution Control District Completes Port of Entry Emissions Study.** Under a grant from EPA's Border 2020 program, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) has completed a study that estimated emissions from northbound vehicles crossing at the Calexico East and West Ports of Entry



(POE). Over 11 million vehicles and 21 million passengers and pedestrians cross these two ports of entry annually. The study concluded that the border delays, which can be as great as 2.5 hours, accounted for up to 63% of emissions from northbound vehicles crossing the border. For NOx emissions, this is equivalent to emissions from 4400 vehicles in Imperial County annually. The report also considered various strategies to reduce emissions. This report will be used to inform transportation and customs agencies of air quality impacts when considering expansions to existing ports or construction of new ports. The report may also be useful in the development of Imperial County's PM2.5 State Implementation Plan (SIP).

**Emissions Inventory Completed for Nogales, Sonora, Mexico.** An emissions inventory of criteria pollutants was recently completed for Nogales, Sonora. Nogales, Sonora, a city of 250,000 inhabitants, is directly across the border from Nogales, Arizona. Although Nogales, Arizona is in non-attainment for PM10, the State has demonstrated that it would be in attainment but for emissions from Nogales, Sonora. The emissions inventory showed that the 87 percent of PM10 emissions and over half of the PM2.5 emissions were from paved and unpaved roads and almost half of the PM2.5 emissions were from wildfires. The results from the emissions inventory will be instrumental in the development of a Pro-Aire, which is a strategic plan to reduce emissions. The Pro-Aire is being funded through EPA/BECC Border 2020 funds.

### Goal 2 – Improve Access to Clean and Safe Water

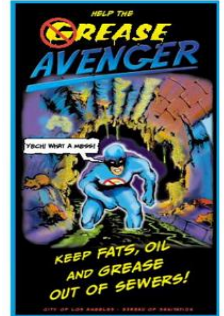
**Holtville, California Kicks-off Construction of Treatment Plant Upgrade.** The City of Holtville began construction in September on an upgrade to its existing 0.85 MGD wastewater treatment plant to meet discharge requirements for ammonia and other pollutants. This \$14M project is jointly funded with \$6.9M in EPA BEIF and \$7.1M in State of California Clean Water Act SRF loan and grant funds. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2016. (Su Cox, 415-972-3555)

**Bisbee, AZ Completes Construction of Wastewater Collection System for the Community of Tintown.** Construction of a wastewater collection system in Tintown, a small community within the city of Bisbee in southeastern Arizona, was completed in July. The community lacked wastewater collection services and relied on failing septic tanks or nonconforming cesspools for its wastewater disposal. The project included 23 new wastewater connections. The \$1.3M project was jointly funded with \$792K in EPA BEIF funds and a \$700K grant from USDA-Rural Development. (Roger Kohn, 415-972-3416)

**Pretreatment Toolkit – Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) – Phase 1 completed.** In July, Phase I of a pretreatment toolkit designed to assist small communities in southern Arizona to develop and implement a FOG-based pretreatment program was completed through a Border 2020 grant. The toolkit includes the requisite documents and templates (e.g., a Sewer Use Ordinance, Enforcement Response Plan, Industrial User permits, and a FOG management policy). Phase 2 of the toolkit will include review of sewer use ordinances and emergency response plans for the cities of Douglas and Willcox, AZ and Holtville, CA as well as the development of permit templates, inspection protocols, and monitoring plans. (Roger Kohn, 415-972-3416)

**Chairs Selected to Lead Border 2020 Tijuana River Watershed Task Force.** David Gibson, Executive Officer of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and Mayra Cruz, watershed coordinator of the Mexican Federal Water Commission in Mexicali were selected to co-chair the Tijuana River Watershed Task Force. Both attended the National Coordinators Meeting held in El Paso, Texas in September. Dave Gibson presented on issues facing the Tijuana River watershed and Hans Huth of ADEQ and co-chair of the Arizona/Sonora Water Task Force presented on issues facing Ambos Nogales. (Doug Liden, 619-235-4763)

**Fats Oils and Greases (FOG) Pretreatment Toolkit Developed.** Under a contract with EPA, Tetra Tech completed the development of a FOG program management policy, approved grease waste hauler program, inspection training guide, enforcement response guide, and outreach materials for commercial and residential users. They also reviewed the City of Nogales' (City) sewer use ordinance (SUO) and enforcement response plan (ERP) and developed forms and procedures for conducting an Industrial Waste Survey (IWS). Work under Phase 2 of the contract will expand these reviews to cover the City of Douglas, AZ, Willcox, AZ, and Holtville, CA. (Doug Liden, 619-235-4763)



**Border 2020 projects announced.** To address both flooding and erosion in Nogales, Sonora, the nonprofit Watershed Management Group of Tucson, Arizona and Instituto Municipal de Investigación y Planeación de Nogales were both awarded grants to create green infrastructure demonstration projects in Nogales, Sonora, as



well as to train civil engineers and engineering students on green infrastructure design. In Tijuana, the non-profit Proyecto Fronterizo de Educacion Ambiental received Border 2020 funding to create an “Ocean Friendly Restaurant” campaign designed to reduce the number of single-use Styrofoam products distributed by restaurants located in Playas de Tijuana. These cups and food containers frequently make it to the beach and break into pieces too small to be collected before entering the ocean. This program will be modeled after a similar initiative implemented by the Surfrider Foundation in San Diego. (Doug Liden, 619-235-4763)

### **Goal 3 –Promoting Materials and Waste Management and Clean Sites**

**COLEF Panel Discusses Border Environment and Climate Change.** COLEF was one of five Latin American academic institutions that hosted the 2015 Environmental Leaders Program (LEAD), a program for Latin American public and private sector leaders administered by Colegio de Mexico, a university in Mexico City. Emily Pimentel served on a panel discussion on September 8<sup>th</sup> along with Mario Vasquez of BECC and Francisco Bernal of CILA to share their respective institutions' mission and how they coordinate and collaborate to address border public health environmental as well as climate change issues. LEAD, founded through an initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1991, works to develop leaders around the world. See <http://www.lead.org/>.



**Nogales Trash Cleanup and Mitigation.** The Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH) contractor has been working under an EPA REPA \$60K contract to characterize border trash in the Nogales Wash in Ambos Nogales (Nogales, AZ and Nogales, SN). The assessment is based on analyzing aerial imagery from the previous 5 to 10 years and other information sources, including interviews with EPA, ADEQ, Ambos Nogales stakeholders, and others. The week of August 31<sup>st</sup>, BAH conducted site visits to ground truth the data and meet with stakeholders in Ambos Nogales about the sites and cleanup priorities. The finding of this initial assessment will be compiled into a report to inform the identification of sites to be recommended by EPA, ADEQ and Ambos Nogales stakeholders for cleanup later this year. A trash cleanup was completed in Nogales, Sonora earlier this year.



**Arizona Border e-Waste Reuse Toolkit.** The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) launched the e-waste toolkit to the entire state during National Pollution Prevention Week, September 21-27, part of the work under a BECC \$63K grant awarded to ADEQ in 2014. ADEQ piloted the toolkit by working with the border cities of Bisbee, Nogales, Sahuarita, San Luis, Somerton, and Sierra Vista. The final Border 2020 e-waste collection event was held on September 26<sup>th</sup> in Sierra Vista collecting 6,932 pounds of e-waste, resulting in the combined total for six events to 63,656 pounds. ADEQ has promoted the toolkit through newspaper, radio and television. See <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/p2/ewastetoolkit/index.html> for toolkit. J.B. Shaw, the ADEQ lead for this project was interviewed by three radio stations during P2 Week, and [he appeared](#) with Keep Arizona Beautiful on AZTV 7's The Morning Scramble) as well.



**Nogales, Sonora Increases Used Oil Management Capacity.** In September, the City of Nogales Department of Ecology completed the final report for the BECC grant project to reduce used oil contamination. The grant funded a program to develop used oil collection centers to facilitate access to recyclers and to increase compliance for small quantity used oil generators. Nogales also developed a media campaign with TV and radio coverage on best



management practices for managing used oil. The project implemented during 18 months in 2014-2015 resulted in the collection of 398,000 liters of used oil from 103 sites, mostly auto mechanics. To ensure the success of the used oil collection effort, the Department of Ecology trained 280 used oil generators in the proper collection and storage of used oil through workshops and personalized shop visits. Each trainee received a manual, developed through this grant, on hazardous materials reduction, storage and disposal. Since this project was implemented, now over 90 percent of small businesses have used oil management capacity. (Andre Villasenor, 213-244-1813)

**Environmental Finance Center (EFC) Grant Supports Border.** The EFC West, affiliated with the Dominican University, was awarded a grant amendment of \$125K in July 2015 to support additional activities in FY 16, the last year of a six year cooperative agreement. EFC is supporting two new border activities: (1) technical support to research and make recommendations on sustainable funding for Imperial Valley asthma environmental health services and (2) Sustainable Materials Management forum to support Border 2020 Goal 3. The asthma work is being done under EPA's national Making a Visible Difference (MVD) initiative. EFC is also supporting a second MVD activity to develop compost services for Las Vegas and is completing a Tijuana compost market survey.



**Local Community and Institutions Unite to Beautify Mexicali Canal.** The Sonoran Institute (SI), working under a \$65,000 BECC grant, led trash cleanup and mitigation efforts and planted 29 trees consisting of mezquites, acacias, and palo verde as part of a community park development plan along the 1.5 km area of the New River nearest to the border in Mexicali. The public event held on September 11<sup>th</sup> engaged community residents including children from the neighborhood school. A total of 128 individuals participated. Seventeen institutions were represented including EPA (Emily Pimentel) and BECC (Briselda Durate). The event also included a second cleanup of 22 m<sup>3</sup> of trash including about 40 tires. To promote awareness among the larger Mexicali community about the campaign to reduce trash and revitalize the drains, The Sonoran Institute launched the “Mexicali Fluye” campaign, which translates to Mexicali “flows” in reference to revitalizing communities, as well as water flowing in the drains.



**Inter-American Development Bank Funds e-Waste Program in Mexicali.** In July 2015, Camanoe Associates submitted a work plan to BECC for the project “Baseline Study and Market Analysis for the Recycling of Used Electronic Products in Mexicali, Baja California”. The work would be performed with experts from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Autonomous University of Baja CA, and the Catholic University of Peru, as part of a three year e-waste program administered by BECC for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and in collaboration with EPA’s Border 2020 Goal 3. The IDB’s program objectives are to increase market opportunities to repair and recycle electronics in Mexico, while meeting Border 2020 objectives to safely and efficiently manage e-waste in accordance with best management practices. The IDB formerly launched the program during its mission trip to Tijuana and Mexicali on June 24-25.



**Task Force Meets in Mexicali, Baja CA.** On September 10<sup>th</sup> Task Force Co-chairs, Emily Pimentel, EPA, Delegado Alfonso Blancafort Oriel, SEMARNAT, Sub-Director Saul Guzman, SPA, and Alfredo Rios, DSTC chaired the California/Baja CA Waste and Enforcement Task Force. The meeting, held in SEMARNAT’s offices, included about 30 attendees, among the US participants were Jeremy Bauer, EPA, Elise Rosenberg, DTSC, and Romina Schiess, San Diego Co. The Sonoran Institute provided an overview of its trash cleanup and mitigation project along the New River. Tijuana Calidad de Vida discussed development of Tijuana’s municipal compost program and described a new e-waste market assessment sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank. The task force was also invited to provide input on the “Ocean Friendly Restaurants” initiatives to reduce plastic trash and Tijuana’s Ecoparque food scraps compost pilot, two new Border 2020 projects funded through the latest round of BECC grants.



**Border 2020 Binational Waste Policy Forum Outlines Path Forward.** The Border 2020 Goal 3 Binational Waste Policy Forum and Regional Task Force leaders and members met during the National Coordinators Meeting held September 22-23 in El Paso. The representatives shared highlights of the two-year action plans and provided input on several possible borderwide priorities, including topics on end-of-life vehicles, scrap tires, construction debris, plastics, electronics and lead-acid batteries, as well as needed waste management infrastructure and capacity building for materials management. EPA and SEMARNAT co-chairs agreed to finalize binational guidance and develop outreach efforts on end-of-life vehicle best management practices; expand the Consultative Mechanism to include electronic (e-waste) and lead-acid battery recyclers; and promote cross-media, international efforts to reduce plastic trash through campaigns such as “Trash free waters” (<http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/>).

## Goal 4 – Emergency Preparedness and Response

**Border Task Force Trained to Respond to HAZMAT Traffic Accidents.** On July 10, Baja California and Arizona-Sonora Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Task Force members participated in simultaneous exercises in Mexicali and Agua Prieta sponsored by PROFEPA. The Mexicali scenario was a hazardous waste truck that was involved in a car accident causing a release of solids impregnated with flammable liquids to the environment. The Agua Prieta scenario involved two tanker trucks carrying Sodium Hydrosulfide and Ferro Cyanide that collided with a vehicle resulting in at least one death and several injuries.



**Task Force Convenes HAZMAT Symposia in Mexicali and Agua Prieta.** Border 2020 Goal 4 Task Force Co-Chairs provided an overview of the Incident Command System (ICS) and provided presentations on roles and responsibilities of various agencies.

**Agencies from Arizona and Sonora Gather for First Responder Awareness Training.** Nearly 200 individuals from various agencies from the cities of Douglas, Agua Prieta, Cananea, Naco, Nacozari, Esqueda and Hermosillo participated in the First Responder Awareness Course (FRA) in Douglas and Agua Prieta on July 8-9. The 8-hour course was designed as a basic awareness course that teaches responders how to protect life, property and minimize the environmental impact of a hazardous materials incident. It covered such topics as establishing scene management; detecting the presence of hazardous materials; initiating evacuation; establishing personnel protection and decontamination; and isolating and containing the incident.

**Border 2020 Arizona-Sonora Task Force Discusses Sister City Plans.** On July 10, ninety people participated in the quarterly Arizona-Sonora task force meeting. The primary focus of the meeting was the format for the Douglas-Agua Prieta, Ambos Nogales, and San Luis-Yuma-San Luis Colorado Sister City Plans. The meeting also involved a discussion of recent training (e.g, Union Pacific Sulfuric Acid by Rail, ICS, FRA, First Responder Operations, Traffic Incident Management System) and an acknowledgement that more ICS training is needed. During the meeting, the position of Arizona Co-Chair transferred from Chief Les Caid to Chief Mario Novoa. The next meeting will be in Puerto Penasco on October 23.



**Wilcox, Arizona Donates Personal Protective Equipment.** The city of Wilcox, Arizona donated personal protective equipment (jackets, helmets, boots, and gloves), hoses and other firefighting equipment to the Border 2020 Program. The equipment has been delivered to the following Sonoran fire departments: Agua Prieta, Nacozari, Esqueda, Cananea, Arizpe and Huepac.

## Goal 5 – Enhance Compliance Assurance and Environmental Stewardship

**California Border Environmental Task Force Meeting.** Alfredo Rios of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) hosted the California Border Environmental Task Force meeting on September 9 in San Diego. The group represents local and state agencies from California and federal agencies working in the border region. Among the topics addressed, DTSC reported periodically conducting unannounced southbound inspections during hours outside of approved hazardous waste inspection hours in cooperation with California Highway Patrol at designated weigh stations. There was also discussion about the limited availability for cathode ray tubes (CRTs) recycling markets and how that is expected to adversely impact recycling business in Mexicali and elsewhere in the border region. The task force agreed to maintain dialogue between US and Mexican regulators.

## Environmental Health

### **EPA and BECC bring Asthma Expertise to Imperial Valley to Build Treatment Capacity.**

On August 27, 2015, Dr. James Seltzer delivered a continuing education program on environmental aspects of treating asthma for clinicians working in Imperial Valley. Imperial Valley typically faces the highest asthma hospitalization rates in California. Thirty-five participants attended the training, including doctors, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and others. CME credits were available to participants. The training focused on recognizing and managing environmentally induced asthma; identifying environmental stimuli that worsen asthma; taking an environmental history related to asthma; understanding the prognosis of environmentally-induced asthma; and counseling patients/caregivers about reducing exposure to asthma triggers. EPA and BECC sponsored the training through an agreement with the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU). The instructor, Dr. Seltzer, is a board-certified physician and pediatrics and allergy / immunology expert. As a member of the PEHSU, he has presented throughout the world on indoor air quality, ambient air pollution, mold, and their relationship to respiratory conditions.



**U.S.-Mexico Border Program Awards Two New Environmental Health Projects.** Border 2020 has awarded a \$98,518 grant to the El Centro Regional Medical Center (ECRMC) and a \$37,975 grant to the Sonora Environmental Research Institute, Inc (SERI). ECRMC will implement 10 asthma forums to teach residents about preventing asthma triggers. Activities will also include referral services of asthmatic children via home visits and implementation of the Healthy Homes Training specifically for low-income housing. SERI will collect environmental health data and characterize environmental health along the Arizona-Sonora border in a report. The report will focus on childhood blood levels, mercury, pesticides poisoning, asthma rates, and asthma hospitalizations.

**EPA and Border Health Commission Renew and Expand Collaborative Agreement.** After a year of successes, the EPA and U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission (BHC) (U.S. Section) distributed on September 21-22 at the National Coordinators Meeting in El Paso, Texas a new collaborative agreement between the two agencies and an accomplishments report detailing successes under the previous agreement. The new agreement identifies three areas of collaboration including public health and environmental leadership, environmental health capacity, and institutional resiliency and accountability. Examples of successes under the prior agreement included establishment of a Pediatric Environmental Health Speciality Unit (PEHSU) along the border; delivery of 14 promotor training courses in over eight cities along the Border; and collaboration on curriculum development, team projects, and environmental leadership for the annual Leaders Across Borders initiative. The collaborative agreement and accomplishments report are both available on the [Border 2020 website](#).

## **EPA Partners with Border Health Commission to Bring Environmental Health Experts and Build Capacity for “Promotores” Working along the Border.**

EPA partnered with the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC) to sponsor three full-day workshops for environmental health *promotores* who work in the California-Baja California and Arizona-Sonora border region. Presenters included environmental health experts from the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, Jeremy Bauer, Regional Coordinator for Border Environmental Health in EPA’s San Diego Border Office, and Nancy Palate of the California Department of Public Health. Ms. Palate also loaned her expertise to help facilitate two of the three workshops and to help Mr. Bauer



and Jackie Menghrajani of EPA’s Region 9 Children’s Health Program to design the workshop program. Topics included indoor/outdoor air quality and asthma triggers, pesticides exposure, lead exposure, water quality, and climate change.

The three interactive workshops included group activities to facilitate exchange of information and ideas among attendees and to encourage professional networking. Attendance exceeded expectations: 34 attended the September 1 workshop in Chula Vista, CA; 47 in El Centro, CA; and 30 in Nogales, Arizona. Attendees included *promotores* from both the U.S. and Mexico, and simultaneous interpretation was provided. The training was very well-received, and participants requested that EPA follow up with additional training and information, potentially through a regular newsletter. Training materials are available on the [Border 2020 website](#).



## **Registration Now Open for Symposium on Children’s Environmental Health in the Border Region.**

Following a successful symposium focused on environmental health issues faced by children living in the border region of EPA Region 6, planning continues for a complementary symposium to take place in San Diego, CA on January 27-28 focused on the California-Baja California and Arizona-Sonora border region. The symposium will provide a forum for doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers, health outreach workers, *promotores* and others in the public health community who work with border populations to learn about and share the most recent environmental health information and best practices. EPA is inviting participants from both the U.S. and Mexico, and simultaneous interpretation will be provided. Event details and registration instructions are available on the [Border 2020 website](#). The symposium is sponsored by the U.S. EPA, in partnership with the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission, Agency for Toxic Substances and Diseases Registry, U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission, California Department of Public Health, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, and Sonora Environmental Research Institute, Inc. Contact Jackie Menghrajani ([menghrajani.jacquelyn@epa.gov](mailto:menghrajani.jacquelyn@epa.gov)) or Jeremy Bauer ([bauer.jeremy@epa.gov](mailto:bauer.jeremy@epa.gov)).