

Border 2012 Summary of Comments

Border 2012/Frontera 2012

1. Welcome/Introductions

EPA & CAL EPA Representatives

- ☞ Introduction by Tomas Torres
- ☞ Introduction of attendees
- ☞ Review of the agenda

2. Draft Border Plan Presentation

☞ (Audio-visual) “Border 2012 program”

the border region covers 2000 miles from the pacific ocean to the gulf of Mexico, 12 million people live here, sharing a rich history, culture, and economy.

Some of the important issues that we deal with such as the lack of potable water, air pollution and improper waste management, cause a high incidence of water and air born diseases.

To address these environmental issues, federal, state, local and US tribes formed this binational organization.

Border 2012 will solve and protect public health and the environment based on the principles of sustainable development.

Latest binational plan implemented by the “La Paz agreement”, border 21 developed in 1996, after the North American free trade agreement was signed, anticipating the environmental effects in the region, the US and Mexico launched this program to promote intergovernmental cooperation, ensuring transparency, public participation and effectiveness in border regions, media related, and functional work groups.

Also developed at the time, two international organizations to deal with the issues BECC, and NADBANK, to identify and develop environmental projects. Nine work groups were structured in the last 5 years, supporting binational environmental activities, drinking water, sewage collection, waste water treatment, in addition with the support of BECC and NADBANK, 31 water and waste related infrastructure projects were completed serving 1.6 million us and Mexico residents.

Seven sister cities agreements were signed to deal with the environmental issues in their regions.

Border 2012 proposes several changes from the previous programs, including a bottom up approach, regionally and locally decision making.

Key changes like a new mission statement, pollution prevention and environment responsibility of all coordinating bodies.

A 10 year planning period, a new organizational structure that facilitates regional and local level planning and priority setting.

It adopts 10 guiding principles, that ensures that activities become consistent and help support the mission of the program. The program will reduce health risks, use a bottom up approach for setting priorities, address disproportionate environmental impact, improve state holder participation, provide an open dialogue with access to information, strengthen the capacity of state holders, to manage environmental issues in the

community, Include tribes and indigenous communities in the program, achieve measurable results, measure progress through the use of environmental indicators.

Border 2012 proposes 5 environmental goals, for the US-Mexico border region. Reduce water contamination, reduce air pollution, reduce land pollution, reduce exposure to pesticide, particularly children's exposure. Reduce the exposure to chemicals, measurable plans have been proposed.

To reduce water contamination this plan proposes: 1) Increase the amount of people connected to water and wastewater management systems. 2) Water quality standards for the border regions. 3) Reduce by 10% the number of days of public health advisories in border coastal waters. 4) Assess 10% of the existing water systems to make them more efficient.

To reduce air pollution: 1) Reduce air emissions as much as possible, and reduce human exposure to air pollution. 2) Identify ways to reduce air pollution in border region 3) identify specific emission reduction strategies to be achieved by 2012.

To reduce land contamination; increase by 50% the number of industries, that are complying voluntarily with environmental regulations, Identify strategies to improve the management capacity, regulatory compliance, and pollution prevention, hazardous and solid waste, along the border. Clean up three of the largest abandoned tire sites in the region. Develop a binational clean up, reuse and revitalization, for abandoned waste sites on the border.

Reduce exposure to pesticides by training 36 000 farm workers, for safe handling and risks of usage of pesticides.

Reduce exposure to chemicals, as a result of chemical releases, and or deliberate acts of terrorism, develop notification mechanisms between Mexico and US, joint contingency plans, for all 14 sister cities, including preparedness and prevention methods.

The creation of 4 multimedia regional work groups supporting the efforts of local taskforces, and coordinating activities, at a regional and local level, these shared by one state and federal representative of each country.

Border wide shared by federal and Mexico co chairs, these groups will address issues of environmental health, emergency preparedness response, and cooperative performance and compliance. Policy forms with a media specific focus, to deal with broad policy issues that require an ongoing dialogue between US and Mexico.

3 policy for air, water, and hazardous waste solid waste toxic substances will be established to provide technical assistance to regional and border wide regional work groups. National coordinators will monitor and manage the implementation of border 2012.

Every two years the coordinating bodies will prepare an implementation report that describes the status of current and proposed

activities under the Border 2012 program. This progress report that will asses mid-term and final accomplishments that describe progress on meetings. Public participation will be implemented.

The goals and objectives of the program, including environmental indicators, will be published in 2006 and 2012 respectively.

3. Mike Montgomery - EPA(visual presentation) “California- Baja California regional issues”

- Issues that EPA and CALEPA have identified:
 - Calexico: air quality, new power plants in the region. Several programs developed, in wastewater management.
 - Tecate: air quality, solid and hazardous waste, have developed work groups, improvement of the collection systems.
 - SD-Tijuana; BAQUA, and several inspection programs for air quality. Tijuana Master plan was developed.
 - Tribal communities in the California- Baja California regions have identified several environmental problems, that border 2012 is addressing.

4. Question & Answer Discussion

Kimbely Collins SDSU, Imperial Valley campus in Calexico

- ☞ Where are the funding sources, how does the funding go trough?
- ☞ Tribal issues, Natural resources aren't included in the plan, when are they going to be deled with?

We invited natural resources agencies to participate with the program, but they decided to pursue individual agreements on specific protected areas, they agreed to work with us in a regional level. Natural resources can be incorporated to the program I a regional level, so we will have to wait to see their specific proposals on particular resource issues, and see how it progresses, they will work on a local level.

Resource its rather complicated, we get an amount of money annually 3- 3.5 millions, for the border environmental infrastructure for waste water and water issues. The plan is the get the funds from congress that is not much compared to the wastewater infrastructure program that's around 75 million. Counterparts in Mexico, projecting the resources that they might provide.

We will work from state, from the NADBANK; expand the support from BECC maybe with several of their specific program grants.

We have a yearly based budget.

☒ Why didn't you organize a meeting in the capital of Baja California: Mexicali?

SEMARNAT put together a meeting around November 20th. Or 21st. for Mexicali and Calexico, having domestic meeting, so they will be having these meetings, I can inform you the dates when there available to me.

5. Public comment period

☒ Brad Poiriez , Imperial County Air pollution, Senior manager. Address 150, south 9th street, El Centro CA.

☒ I thank you for extending this invitation to us to participate in issues that affect the air quality, and be a part of the program.

☒ Suggestions:

☒ We already have programs to improve the air quality in the region one of them being: The "Mexicali 2000-2005" that focuses on the air pollution management with specific control measures. Border 2012 should follow the guidelines that were set on these pre-established binational programs. Border 2012 should refine and expand these programs, instead of reinventing a new proposal.

☒ APCD agrees that is urgent to assemble a new taskforce to deal with issues such as formal designation of a binational shared air basin, to move beyond legislation that a government taskforce is formulated, work should be established, to

☒ Legislation on both sides of the border for equal air quality standars. Use of technology.

☒ Mitigation for reduction of air emissions from existing sources in the region and not only new sources.

☒ Commitment to formulate a cross-border emission reduction credit trade program, allow industrial growth in the air basin, regulated admission growth

☒ I volunteer my support and of my staff for working on the already established regional workgroup, I don't believe in the need of a new taskforce, but the participation of federal and state.

We have several taskforces, that have been operating on previous program with good results, those will be adopted as an example.

Margarito Quintero, UABC Instituto de Ingenieria Mexicali Bja Cfa. Mex

Talking about our atmosphere across the border, I will address a lot a issues in a proposal that I will mail to you, but Ill comment on some of the points made in my documents as is the air issue:

In an overview; the program is very generalized, also a very short document

No link between different binational entities or different previous programs, like frontera 21, or the ones that did not have a favorable outcome, there is no follow-up on previous results.

The fact that border 21 focuses toward environment and public health is a very good point because I had not seen this in the past with such attention.

It would be positive that decision-making should be established trough Federal and state and local alliances.

Public participation, and open dialogue is very important but not specific in the document, how this process will take place.

Follow up of the achievements of the program trough

Environmental indicators, and the health related issues, and having follow-ups trough out all the process.

UN proposes prevention more than remediation of pollution an also implemented in Mexico.

In the 2nd proposal related to air pollution I would like to comment. The industries that don't use the newest technology and the excessive use of wastewater in deserted areas such as our case, the generation of residual solids like Cerro Prieto, that is not noted because of the distance from the border that this region holds.

Take in to consideration that Mexicali is in a critical stage because of the high levels of pollution, so that we implement severe laws and environmental regulations to improve the already deficient air resources, that doesn't fulfill the regulations of both sides of the border.

Monitoring our air quality in an actual time, and not have old data.

Jose L. Angel, division chief , watershed protection division, regional water quality control board region 7.

Regarding the generality of the document, not a lot of specificity there are ongoing projects in the Mexicali area.

Our concerns are with the use of terms like compliance of the **majority** water quality standards, because what we want to achieve is consistent compliance with **all** quality standards.

Another concern is that the specific goals in the water issues, dont it include residual water?

It is important to address the greatest risk for public health; dealing the pollution levels, and management of sewage waters management treatment

The scheduling of the meetings; with enough time to prepare our formal comments and questions

Kimberly Collins, SDSU

- ☒ Border region with highly water contamination levels, how are we going to deal with the increase of these levels trough time?
- ☒ The usage of dry-cooling in the industries, should be implemented.
- ☒ Additional funding provided for the plan not only depend on the water funds.
- ☒ Cleaning water piles in Mexicali
- ☒ Request an energy policy plan, to be included not only as a regional issue but as a border wide issue.

Jerry Santiago, city of Brawley

In terms of funding, our water systems are 65 years old, they don't meet any standards we need to develop new systems there isn't enough funding to do this, the increased demand makes this harder.

In the goals proposed in the programs you mention the detection of communities without water, the city of Brawley is one of then poorest in this area and the same community funds itself form this availability, we can identify these problems but, whose going to pay for this.

Once we identify the problem there is no one to fund the solution so this is not sufficient

Tony Tirado Imperial Valley County supervisor district 1 Calexico,

Our region is polluted we need support, we are the ones who have to leave here, smell and inhale, the New River committee is doing a lot for us, with some sponsorship of Calexico, state and federal government haven't taken the lead in this issue.

I support Kimberly Collins, with her comments.

The use of scrubbers, the use of natural gases for better air quality.

We need support from Mexico government to not permit the development of plants without respecting CALEPA regulations, that take our air and pollute our water.

Rudy Maldonado, chairperson for Calexico New River committee

I will focus on water issues, Our committee requesting funds form BECC and refused to help us, neither from NADBANK, I think that we should revise what are they doing for the community, we see a lot of funding for Texas, none for us. What about California, New Mexico and Arizona, there neighbor to Mexico too.

The discharge of water from the two power plants going to new river, this will bring more temperature, less water flow and lot of contaminated water with discharges and human waste, and Washington does not support us, we need fair fund, equality as cities. We are being ignored, and not treated equally. There is a lack of response, from several entities.

We don't know whom to talk to USEPA, paid for a master plan for Tijuana, we want this for Mexicali, and there growth is impacting us.

To give an example; did you know that across the border are using tires and car batteries to build bricks and nobody notices it.

We can't manage our growth, we don't know what the repercussions are, we don't have any response from federal government.

I would like to know where this information is headed, who deals with air and water issues in Imperial Valley.

We need help air and water is our biggest issue, we need answers.

- Summary of the debt line for the question and answer, and public opinion submitting.

6. Closing by Tomas Torres.