



**Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) Teleconference
Call-in number: 1-866-299-3188; conference code: 2022330068#
September 7, 2017; 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EDT**

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome, Introductions and Overview of Agenda

Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB, and Mark Joyce, Associate Director, Federal Advisory Committee Management Division (FACMD), Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Mr. Mark Joyce, Associate Director, FACMD, OARM, EPA, welcomed the participants and conducted the roll call. A list of meeting participants is included as Appendix A. The purpose of this teleconference is to discuss and approve the final draft of GNEB's 18th report; significant changes cannot be made at this time. It is important to ensure that the references are accurate; members will be contacted with any questions. All comments and revisions *should* be submitted no later than close of business on Friday, September 8; all revisions *must* be received no later than close of business on Monday, September 11.

Dr. Paul Ganster, GNEB Chair, provided an overview of the agenda (Appendix B), explaining that he would seek general comments about the report before soliciting comments about specific chapters.

The official certification of the minutes by the Chair is included as Appendix C.

Review of the Current Draft

Mr. Steve Niemeyer and Mr. Ed Drusina thought that the report is well done. In response to a question from Dr. Jose Francisco Zamora-Arroyo, Dr. Ganster explained that the graphic designer will ensure that images are placed appropriately, but if GNEB members think that images should be placed in different sections from their current positions, they should point these instances out.

Executive Summary

Dr. Teresa Pohlman suggested that the phrase "paramount significance" on pages viii and 1 be changed to "great significance."

Dr. Pohlman thought that the following sentence in lines 32–33 on page viii was confusing: "The border has areas of great natural beauty and value, whereas other portions of the border have large and growing human settlements that depend on environmental quality." The areas of natural beauty and value also depend on environmental quality rather than just the human settlements. Mr. Payne suggested changing the end of the sentence to "...all of which rely on environmental quality."

Introduction

In response to a question about the resolution of the figures, Dr. Ganster explained that the figures will be replaced with high-resolution images. Those in the current document were compressed so that the file size was small enough to be sent by email. The graphic artist also will ensure that the images are placed attractively on the page.

Chapter 1: Border Context

Dr. Pohlman thought that this chapter does a good job of setting the context and includes interesting information.

Ms. Jeanne Eckhart thought that “demand” in line 26 on page 4 should be changed to “demands.”

Ms. Eckhart asked whether “(pg. 29)” could be removed from Figure 3. Dr. Ganster responded that the graphic designer could remove this. A GNEB member requested that the year of the source be added to Figure 3.

Ms. Eckhart asked whether “were” should be added before “developed” in line 16 on page 6. The Board decided the sentence should remain as is.

Ms. Lisa Schaub asked, when discussing the poverty rate in Section 1.1.3, whether it would be correct to say that the area would be first in poverty. Dr. Ganster and Ms. Kristen LeBaron will work on revising this sentence.

Ms. Jennifer Hass suggested using a word other than “significant” when describing the level of environmental effects. The term has a specific meaning from a National Environmental Policy Act context. She will provide a document with the instances highlighted so that they can be changed.

Ms. Hass will send language clarifying the information about the waivers mentioned on page 13. In line 3 of that page, “2007” should be “2005.”

Dr. Zamora-Arroyo thought that lines 8–9 on page 9 should include a mention of the economy.

Dr. Ganster suggested changing the sentence to read: “Protecting the quality of rivers, oceans and other water sources is important for ecological and human health and prosperity in the region.”

Dr. Keith Pezzoli thought that the section on water should acknowledge an awareness that deluges such as that seen with Hurricane Harvey will have dramatic effects. Modeling indicates that storm events and their deluges will be stronger. Dr. Ganster noted that GNEB’s last report mentions an increase in severe weather events. He will think about this point as he reads through the document and include this if it fits well. Mr. Drusina commented that Hurricane Harvey does not need to be specifically mentioned, but the threat remains if a hurricane hits the Gulf Coast close to the border. The current levee system in the Rio Grande Valley is not 100 percent up to Federal Emergency Management Agency standards, and this point may be worth mentioning. He will send suggested language. Dr. Ganster noted that some of the proposed fencing may be placed on top of the levee, so if the levee is not up to standards, problems may arise in the face of major storms.

Chapter 2: Challenges and Opportunities, Part I

Dr. Pohlman noted that the instances of CPB should be CBP; Ms. LeBaron will correct all instances.

Ms. Schaub noted that phrases similar to those in lines 16–17 on page 23 are used several times. It may require rewriting to reduce the redundancies.

Ms. Edna Mendoza noted that the letter “n” needs to be removed from the word “Texas” in line 4 on page 24.

Ms. Schaub recommended removing the term “limitrophe” on line 20 of page 26 because it may be unfamiliar to readers. She suggested the sentence be changed to begin: “Along the portion of the Colorado River that forms...”

Dr. Zamora-Arroyo stated that the tamarisk should have the specific species named; he will send this information. Ms. Lisa LaRocque asked whether all species mentioned should have their scientific names included. Dr. Ganster replied that the concern was to ensure that the invasive species were identified by scientific names. Mr. Joyce noted that the general rule should be to include scientific names for all species.

Ms. Hass will send factual corrections about the information on line 7 of page 28.

Chapter 3: Challenges and Opportunities, Part II

Dr. Ganster noted that Table 1 will be made more attractive.

Mr. Niemeyer will ensure that the agencies listed in Table 4 are correct.

Mr. Gilbert Anaya stated that the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) would like to add information about operations, maintenance and renovation costs to line 13 on page 40. He will send the desired language.

Ms. Schaub suggested adding the word “adversely” to line 15 on page 41.

Ms. Mendoza thought that the last two paragraphs on page 46 were repetitive. She will provide suggested language.

Dr. Zamora-Arroyo asked about the use of “gallons per day” in line 5 on page 49. The use of “acre-feet” generally is more common. Dr. Ganster and Mr. Jose Angel explained that the term gallons per day is commonly used to refer to the New River flow. Mr. Anaya commented that the common unit of measure is usually cubic meters per second. Mr. Angel noted that the equivalent in cubic meters per second could be included in parentheses after gallons per day. Mr. Anaya will provide the amount of cubic meters per second to be added to the report.

Mr. Angel will send language to correct the Figure 12 legend.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

Dr. Pezzoli read the comments that Mr. Cyrus Reed had sent via email prior to the teleconference. On page 52, line 30, he had requested that the beginning of the sentence be changed to: “The Board recommends that DHS engage all stakeholders, including local governments, as well as the private sector, academics and border communities...” Dr. Pohlman was not in favor of providing a list of stakeholders so as not to leave any out.

Mr. Reed had provided a suggestion to add the following recommendation to the “Reduce Environmental Footprint” section on page 52: “Use of green infrastructure—the natural barriers to transport of undocumented peoples or goods—should be examined as an alternative to physical border security infrastructure where viable.”

Dr. Eaton did not think that the report should suggest replacing other structures with green infrastructure. Dr. Pohlman agreed. Dr. Pezzoli thought that the idea is to avoid spending funds on other structures if green infrastructure or natural barriers can work as well or better. Dr. Pohlman noted that any recommendations about the cost-effectiveness of natural borders versus other structures would need to be evidence-based. Dr. Pezzoli did not think that the recommendation implied they were more cost-effective; it recommends that green infrastructure and natural barriers be explored in addition to other structures. Dr. Eaton agreed that exploring green infrastructure makes sense, but the report should not include a discussion that is not based on evidence. Dr. Ganster agreed that it is best to avoid a discussion about

cost-effectiveness, particularly because of the lack of data along the border, and he will revise the language to recommend that green infrastructure is examined without any inference to cost-effectiveness. Dr. Eaton thought that “option” would be a better word than “alternative.” The Board agreed to change the recommendation to: “Use of green infrastructure—the natural barriers to transport of undocumented peoples or goods—should be examined as an option to improve physical border security and environmental quality where viable.”

Ms. Schaub suggested adding the phrase “and other sensitive habitats to line 22 on page 52. Line 32 on the same page includes the phrase “critical species.” She wondered whether it should be changed to sensitive species. The Board agreed to change “critical” to “sensitive.”

Mr. Drusina explained that a situation has developed during the last 6 months that is important to address as a recommendation. He will work with Mr. Anaya to develop language about studying the condition of aging wastewater infrastructure along the border and the capacity of communities to provide the funding to execute operation, maintenance and repairs. An increasing number of failures are occurring that contaminate international waters. Dr. Ganster agreed that this is an issue and asked whether the Department of Homeland Security would support such a recommendation. Dr. Pohlman and Ms. Hass stated that it is a good recommendation that their agency would support. A GNEB member thought that such a recommendation should be placed under its own heading rather than within one of the existing headings in Chapter 4.

Ms. Mendoza thought that responses to flooding or wastewater flows should be included in line 29 of page 53. All of the recommendations under the “Continue and expand cross-border fire and emergency response systems” heading focus on fire response. Other situations (e.g., failing infrastructure) also need cross-border responses. Responses move from the local through the state level, and she would like this to be reflected. The section should be expanded to recognize that responses to emergencies other than fire occur. This also could be captured in the section that IBWC plans to add. Ms. Mendoza will develop and send language to address this.

Dr. Zamora-Arroyo commented that many border issues require collaboration with agencies and communities in Mexico. He asked whether a recommendation that existing coordination programs be continued should be included in the report; he thought that a specific recommendation about bilateral cooperation should be included. Dr. Ganster replied that previous GNEB reports had included recommendations about bilateral coordination. Dr. Zamora-Arroyo will consider possible language and where it could be placed within the recommendations.

Ms. Hass noted that a number of recommendations are ambiguous regarding to which agency they are addressed. For example, the first recommendation under “Enhance efforts to reduce flooding and trash and sedimentation flows.” Dr. Ganster noted that this recommendation was directed to agencies installing security infrastructure or performing any other work that would cause problems with changes in flow and create adverse environmental effects. It was broadly written to ensure that IBWC is included in all discussions about actions that could alter the hydrology and affect treaties with Mexico. Dr. Ganster stated that the term “stakeholders” could be added to the recommendation to clarify that it is intentionally broad.

Appendices

Dr. Pohlman and Ms. Hass thought that the appendices looked good.

Ms. Schaub pointed out the note on page 67 about whether the memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been updated as planned. Ms. Hass has requested information about the MOU and will provide an

update if she receives one on Friday, September 8. If an update is not provided, the Board agreed to delete the following text: “This MOU now is being prepared for renewal.”

Next Steps and Schedule

Dr. Ganster thanked the Board members for reading the report so thoroughly.

By Monday, September 11, Ms. Mendoza will inform Mr. Joyce about whether the state of Arizona will recuse itself.

Mr. Joyce stated that all additional text should be sent to him, Dr. Ganster and Ms. LeBaron no later than Friday, September 8. All revisions/additional text *must* be submitted no later than Monday, September 11.

Adjournment

Dr. Ganster thanked the GNEB members for their input during the teleconference. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m. EDT.

Action Items

- Ms. LeBaron will make all of the nonsubstantive changes discussed during the call and sent via email.
- Dr. Ganster will make the more substantive changes discussed during the call and sent via email.
- Specific GNEB members and EPA staff have the following responsibilities:
 - Ms. Schaub will submit Region 6’s comments.
 - Ms. Hass will provide comments about use of the term “significant” used to describe environmental effects, information about waivers, corrections about fence construction, and an update about the MOU (if possible).
 - Mr. Drusina will provide language regarding the potential effects of severe weather on the Rio Grande Valley levee system and work with Mr. Anaya to develop a recommendation about the study of aging wastewater infrastructure along the border.
 - Dr. Zamora-Arroyo will send information about the specific tamarisk species and consider where a recommendation about bilateral coordination could be included in Chapter 4.
 - Mr. Niemeyer will ensure that the agencies listed in Table 4 are correct.
 - Mr. Anaya will provide information about operations, maintenance and renovation costs to be added to line 13 on page 40, as well as translations of gallons per day into cubic meters per second.
 - Ms. Mendoza will revise the last two paragraphs on page 46 so that they are not so repetitive and also will develop language to expand the emergency response recommendations to include more than response to wildfires.
 - Mr. Angel will send language to correct the Figure 12 legend.

- All additional text/revisions must be sent via email to Dr. Ganster, Mr. Joyce and Ms. LeBaron ***no later than Monday, September 11***. Submission by Friday, September 8, is preferable.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Chair

Paul Ganster, Ph.D.

Director
Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Nonfederal, State, Local and Tribal Members

Jose Angel

Interim Executive Officer
State Water Resources Control Board
California Regional Water Quality Control
Board
Sacramento, CA

Lauren Baldwin, MBA, LEED-GA

Sustainability Coordinator
City of El Paso, Texas
El Paso, TX

Evaristo Cruz

Director
Environmental and Natural Resources
Department
Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
El Paso, TX

David J. Eaton, Ph.D.

Bess Harris Jones Centennial Professor
LBJ School of Public Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

Lisa LaRocque

Sustainability Officer
Public Works Department
City of Las Cruces
Las Cruces, NM

Edna A. Mendoza

Director
Office of Border Environmental Protection
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Mariel Nanasi

Executive Director
New Energy Economy

Keith Pezzoli, Ph.D.

Teaching Professor, Department of
Communication
Director, Urban Studies and Planning Program
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA

Jose Francisco Zamora-Arroyo, Ph.D.

Director
Colorado River Delta Legacy Program
Sonoran Institute
Tucson, AZ

Federal Members

U.S. Department of Commerce—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Jeff Payne, Ph.D.

Acting Director
Office for Coastal Management
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Mount Pleasant, SC

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Teresa R. Pohlman, Ph.D., LEED, AP

Executive Director
Sustainability and Environmental Programs
Undersecretary for Management
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.

*International Boundary and Water
Commission*
Ed Drusina
Commissioner
U.S. Section
International Boundary and Water Commission
El Paso, TX

U.S. Department of State
Hillary Quam
Border Affairs Coordinator
Office of Mexican Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Sylvia Grijalva
U.S.-Mexico Border Planning Coordinator
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Phoenix, AZ

Nonfederal Alternate

Stephen M. Niemeyer, P.E.
Border Affairs Manager and Colonias Coordinator
Intergovernmental Relations Division
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Austin, TX

Federal Alternates

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Jennifer Hass, J.D.
Environmental Planning and Historic
Preservation Program Manager
Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.

*International Boundary and Water
Commission*
Gilbert Anaya
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division
U.S. Section
International Boundary and Water Commission
El Paso, TX

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Office Participants

Region 3
Jose Redmond
Region 3
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Philadelphia, PA

Lisa Schaub
Region 6
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Dallas, TX

Region 6
Jeanne Eckhart
Environmental Scientist
Region 6
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Dallas, TX

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters Participant

Mark Joyce

Associate Director
Federal Advisory Committee Management Division
Office of Administration and Resources Management
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C

Contractor Support

Kristen LeBaron

Senior Science Writer/Editor
The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc.
Gaithersburg, MD

Appendix B: Teleconference Agenda



Good Neighbor Environmental Board
Public Teleconference
Discussion and Approval of Draft Report on Environmental Protection and Security
In the U.S. – Mexico Border Region

September 7, 2017
12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EDT

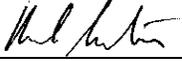
Call In Number: 866-299-3188 Conference Code: 202-233-0068

AGENDA

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| 12:00–12:30 p.m. | Welcome, Introductions and Overview of Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark Joyce, Acting Designated Federal Officer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency• Paul Ganster, Chair, Good Neighbor Environmental Board• Board introductions |
| 12:30–3:30 p.m. | Review of Current Draft <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overarching concerns or questions• Comments or questions on specific chapters or sections |
| 3:30–4:00 p.m. | Next Steps and Schedule |
| 4:00 p.m. | Adjournment |

Appendix C: Chair Certification of Minutes

I, Paul Ganster, Chair of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB), certify that this is the final version of the complete minutes for the teleconference held on September 7, 2017, and that the minutes accurately reflect the discussions and decisions of the meeting.



Paul Ganster, GNEB Chair

September 13, 2017

Date