



Border 2020 Newsletter

Region 9

California, Baja California, Arizona and Sonora
Summer/Fall 2014



www.epa.gov/border2020

This newsletter provides a summary of activities that took place from July to November 2014.

General Updates

EPA Administrator, Gina McCarthy Visits the Border. On October 6 and 7, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Regional Administrator, Jared Blumenfeld met with U.S.-Mexico border stakeholders, toured the border region, and held a press event to announce border funding. They met with the San Diego State University Sage Project to learn about Student-led sustainability efforts in National City, toured portions of the Tijuana River watershed and estuary, where the Administrator learned about diverse issues, including the impacts of plastic, tires, and other debris derived from the river flowing from Tijuana to San Diego. The tour ended with an EPA press conference announcing over [\\$8.6 Million in grants](#) to fund projects to reduce water pollution, recycle e-waste, and improve environmental health along the U.S.-Mexico border, in coordination with the North American Development Bank and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC). During the visit, Administrator McCarthy also presented EPA SmartWay Excellence Awards to freight carriers in California and Arizona at the American Trucking Association's Annual Management Conference. (Torres.tomas@epa.gov)



Region 9 Federal Regional Council (FRC) Convenes in San Diego. On August 7th, the FRC convened in San Diego, in conjunction with the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission's (BHC) Symposium: "The Power of Collaboration". The FRC meeting addressed topics on climate change, health, and the drought, in the context of the border region. EPA Region 9 Regional Administrator Blumenfeld acknowledge the San Diego Federal Green Challenge award recipients: Naval Base Coronado, Drug Enforcement Agency Southwest Lab, and Marine Corps Miramar for their notable efforts in reducing their environmental footprint. Each award recipient shared highlights of their sustainability efforts, best practices and lessons learned. In addition, the Executive Director of the U.S. Section of the BHC, Jose Luis Velasco, shared information on the latest health initiatives and the new collaborative agreement between the BHC and EPA's Border 2020 Program. The FRC is a consortium of 22 federal departments and agencies representing approximately 60 different programs, working in partnership to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of federal programs within Region 9. (Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)



EPA Highlights Border 2020 Project Efforts at the [California Mexico Border Relations Council](#)

(CMBRC). On October 22, EPA presented a Border 2020 progress report to the CMBRC on project efforts, anticipated actions in 2015, and project funding strategy for the next two years. Potential areas where Cal/EPA and/or the California Boards, Departments, and Offices could collaborate in Border 2020 efforts to leverage mutual resources and expertise were also shared. The CMBRC is a cabinet level committee led by Cal/EPA and reports annually to the California Legislature on efforts that California agencies are undertaking along the U.S.-Mexico border. (Torres.tomas@epa.gov)

California/Baja California Regional Workgroup Leadership Convenes in Imperial Beach. On September 3rd, the California/Baja California Regional Workgroup convened at the Tijuana River Estuarine Reserve (in Imperial Beach), to share information with the public on border priorities, program status, and to advance the development of the 2015-2016 Border Action Plans. The air, water, waste, and emergency response Task Forces provided highlights of ongoing efforts and upcoming priorities. The Regional Workgroup Co-Chairs included Carlos Graisbord, Secretary of Baja California's Secretariat for Environmental Protection (SPA), Alex Rodarte, Assistant Secretary for Border Affairs (Cal-EPA), Jeff Scott, Land Division Director (U.S. EPA). (Torres.tomas@epa.gov)



Arizona Sonora Regional Workgroup Convenes in Rio Rico, AZ.

On December 4th the Arizona Sonora Regional Workgroup (RWG) convened to review progress in advancing border environmental efforts and charting a course for the coming year, including:

- Finalizing the 2013-2014 Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup Action Plan and drafting a new one for 2015-2016;
- Providing an overview of mining issues in the Arizona/Sonora border region and best management practices, and
- Convening Task Force meetings to discuss air, water, waste, and emergency preparedness and response issues and priorities.



During the meeting ADEQ announced the launch of an electronic waste (e-waste) recycling toolkit and six e-waste collection events in the Arizona border region. The project funded through a Border 2020 grant of \$63,621 to ADEQ, will result in the collection and recycling of over 100,000 lbs. of e-waste. See [ADEQ press release](#).

The Regional Workgroup Co-Chairs also announced their support to convene a binational workshop on mining issues in the Arizona/Sonora border region, a topic that cuts across all five of the Border 2020 Goals. The goal of the workshop would be to develop capacity on mining best practices, technologies, regulatory structures, and binational incident communication and coordination. The workshop is expected to facilitate cross-cutting information sharing on mines in operation, proposed new mines, and those that are closed or abandoned.

The air, water, and waste and enforcement Task Forces met in the afternoon and focused on finalizing the Border 2020 Action Plans for 2013/2014 and on developing new Border 2020 Action Plans for 2015/2016. See [BECC Bulletin](#) for additional highlights. (Lopez-Powers.lorena@epa.gov)

EPA and Cal/EPA Discuss Areas of Collaboration. On October 14, Jeff Scott, Frances Schultz, and Tomas Torres (via phone) met with Aimee Barnes, Deputy Secretary for Border and Intergovernmental Relations, Alex Rodarte, Assistant Secretary for Border Affairs, and Arsenio Mataka, Assistant Secretary for Environmental

Justice and Tribal Affairs of Cal/EPA to discuss priorities and areas of additional engagement and collaboration. Highlights included: An update on Cal/EPA's new Environmental Health Screening tool ([CalEnviroscreen](#)); details on two new Memorandums Of Understanding (MOU) signed between Cal/EPA and SEMARNAT in July, 2014 (on energy and climate change); specific opportunities to leverage joint efforts to advance goals and objectives in the Border 2020 Program; and a commitment to incorporate Boards, Departments and Offices (BDO) actions and efforts within the 2015-2016 Border 2020 Action Plan. (Torres.tomas@epa.gov)

Goal Updates

Goal 1 – Reduce Air Pollution

Field Work begins at the Calexico Ports of Entry. Under a Border 2020 grant, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District's contractor initiated data collection at the Calexico East and Calexico West Ports of Entry to model emissions of northbound vehicles waiting to cross into the U.S. In total the contractor has surveyed over 900 vehicles and characterized over 10,000 vehicles at the two ports of entry. In addition, wait and processing times were estimated for 4,300 vehicles that crossed into the U.S. One more data collection effort was conducted in December 2014. A final report, relating vehicle emissions to wait times and other factors will be completed in September 2015. (Fege.dave@epa.gov)



Imperial County, California Adopts PM2.5 State Implementation Plan (SIP). On December 2, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) adopted a PM 2.5 plan explaining how the County would have attained the national standard, if not for PM 2.5 transported from Mexico. The hearing was well attended and comments conveyed that there is insufficient monitoring near the Salton Sea, insufficient outreach to the community, and insufficient ICAPCD rule enforcement. Amy Zimpfer provided EPA comments highlighting the collaboration between ICAPCD, EPA, and California's Air Resources Board (CARB) in developing the plan, EPA's work with Mexico to reduce emissions (including installation/operation of PM 2.5 monitors in Mexicali), and EPA's concern about emissions from the receding Salton Sea. (Fege.dave@epa.gov)

Goal 2 – Improve Access to Clean and Safe Water



Work at the Holtville wastewater collection project

Border Water Infrastructure Projects Completed in Border Communities

Sierra Vista, Arizona: Construction of the wastewater collection system expansion project in Sierra Vista, AZ that serves a subdivision with failing on-site systems was completed on September 3, 2014. The \$2 million project benefits 374 residents and has eliminated discharges of inadequately treated sewage by connecting 139 households to the wastewater treatment plant. (Kohn.roger@epa.gov)

Holtville, CA: In June 2014, the City of Holtville, CA completed construction of a residential wastewater collection project to extended service to 20 homes in a small neighborhood with failed septic systems and substandard wastewater connections. The \$680,000 project was

jointly funded with \$250,000 in EPA border water infrastructure funding and a USDA grant and loan. (Cox.Susan@epa.gov)

Baja California: Three projects in Baja California were completed in September 2014 and resulted in over 5,000 households receiving first-time wastewater service. The households in the Lucio Blanco, Plan Libertador and Alcatrazes areas in Tijuana and Rosarito, Baja California previously relied on latrines, septic tanks without drainfields, and discharged to open drains. EPA invested nearly \$1.5 million in grant funds, about 40% of the total project cost, to make the project feasible for the local utility. (Aguirre.hector@epa.gov)

Sediment Model for Tijuana is Underway. EPA is funding the development of a sediment model for Tijuana. This model, funded via EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) Regional Applied Research Effort, will estimate sediment loads caused by erosion under various land-use scenarios. EPA is partnering with San Diego State University, the Center for Scientific Investigations in Ensenada, the University of Cordoba-Spain, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Rain gauges have been installed in Tijuana, and over 100 sites in the watershed have been surveyed for elevation, soil type, and other indicators. EPA has held multiple informational seminars on the model with the City of Tijuana, the public, International Boundary and Water Commission, Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Mexican Federal Water Commission, and others. (Liden.douglas@epa.gov)



West Coast Estuaries Initiative Grant Achieves Notable Accomplishments. Work in the Tijuana Watershed under the 2009 West Coast Estuaries Initiative has concluded. EPA provided the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association with nearly \$1M to restore habitat, clean up trash, and promote environmental stewardship on both sides of the border. The project removed over 29 tons of trash, 10,000 native plants were used in restoration, and thousands of volunteers contributed over 30,000 hours of work. (Liden.douglas@epa.gov)



Goal 3 –Promoting Materials and Waste Management and Clean Sites

Waste Policy Forum will convene in Tijuana. The Border 2020 Waste Policy Forum is planning to convene in Tijuana on February 10-11, with a government delegation meeting in the evening of February 9th. Rick Picardi, of EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response is developing the meeting objectives, agenda, and meeting location in coordination with SEMARNAT and program partners. Details and registration will be available through the following website: [Waste Policy Forum](#). (Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)

Tools to Help Arizona Border Communities Reclaim Resources. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has been working under a \$63,621 Border 2020 grant awarded in 2014 to facilitate the collection and recovery of valuable resources associated with discarded electronic devices, diverting them from being disposed into landfills or illegally dumped. ADEQ is developing a web-based guidance document, referred to as a toolkit, designed to facilitate e-waste collection by border communities. The toolkit will be available in English and Spanish and will provide guidance in six steps, from initial preparation to post-event follow-up. The grant is expected to result in the collection of over 100,000 tons of e-waste, using R2 or e-Stewards certified recyclers, in six border communities. The toolkit is available on [ADEQ's website](#). (Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)



Cleanup Campaign Targets Mexicali International Drains.



The Sonoran Institute (SI) will cleanup a 1.5 km area of the canal in the northern most part of Mexicali, landscape it, and install an Eco-kiosk, creating public green space under a new \$65,000 Border 2020 grant. The work involves surveying the community to identify causes and solutions to mitigate illegal dumping and ways that the community can participate in transforming the canals into much needed green space. The canal cleanup and landscaping project will also serve as a model for an ambitious initiative that has been proposed by state and federal agencies responsible for the operation and maintenance of the canals in Mexicali. On November 3rd, SI held their first community workshop kicking off their survey by consulting government

agencies about the canal issues. They used this feedback to develop the survey for use in the second workshop to be held on December 5th. The survey methods involve workshops and door-to-door type canvassing of residents in four neighborhoods around the canal area being cleaned up, as well as a broader Mexicali survey. SI is working with government and community leaders to leverage resources such as equipment and materials to cleanup and landscape the canal in 2015. (Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)

Environmental Finance Center (EFC) Grant Supports Border Sustainable Materials Management.

The EFC West, affiliated with the Dominican University was awarded a grant in September 2014 for \$120,000 to support border activities that advance Sustainable Materials



Management efforts. The EFC has been tasked with three activities including: preparing a market analysis and business plan to support a sustainable compost program in Tijuana; develop a community-based tool to mitigate illegal dumping in the New River (with a focus on agricultural canals, in Mexicali); and develop a strategic plan for implementing a binational sustainable materials forum in Tijuana covering composting, e-waste, and one other high priority materials stream. An integral part of EFC's work is to research potential funding sources from foundations or other funders, as well as, evaluate materials generated in the region which have the highest reuse market potential. As part of their work, EFC investigators met in Baja California with several government, NGOs, and business representatives from the agricultural, food processing, and other businesses that generate or use organic waste. These findings will inform their market analysis and business plan to support the Tijuana Compost Center and potentially other markets to advance sustainable materials management in the region.

(Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)

Program to Safely Manage Discarded Electronic Devices in Mexicali.



Fundación Hélice was awarded a \$46,987 Border 2020 grant to conduct public and business outreach on best management practices in the collection and recycling of electronics, and will implement collection events in Mexicali expected to recover over 16 tons of discarded electronics devices (e-waste). On November 6th, Fundación Hélice held a workshop for businesses and recyclers covering e-waste laws and regulations, worker safety, public health and environmental risks, and the R2 certification program on best management practices. On November 19th, EPA (Tomas Torres), Delegates for SEMARNAT and SPA (Baja CA's Secretary for Environment) and others attended a press event in Mexicali, organized by Fundación Hélice to inform the public about the three collection events that will be planned in association with the municipality and business partners.

(Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)

Inter-American Development Bank Funds e-Waste Program in Mexicali.

In October 2014, the Inter-American Development Bank approved \$462,000 from the Multi-lateral Investment Fund to implement the "Integrated e-Waste Management Program in Mexicali". The program will be administered by BECC over a 42

month period, in partnership with EPA, the MIT Co-lab, and Fundación Hélice, and is valued at \$790,500 to help advance e-waste recycling enterprises and markets and the safely recycling of e-waste. (Pimentel.emily@epa.gov)

Diversion of Used Motor Oil in Nogales Sonora. The Secretariat for Urban Development and Ecology (SUDE) of Nogales, Sonora is working under a \$16,508 Border 2020 grant to divert and recycle 250,000 liters of used oil by the end of 2015. The City of Nogales is expanding its used oil program by establishing new collection points. SUDE held a workshop in December to provide training on used oil collection and management for small business in Nogales. The city is partnering with oil recyclers to collect used oil free of charge. The project is focusing on small quantity generators of used oil (those that generate less than 400 kg. per year). (Villasenor.andre@epa.gov)



Goal 4 – Emergency Preparedness and Response



Arizona-Sonora Emergency Preparedness Task Force convenes in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, on October 9-10. Approximately 85 emergency response personnel from both sides of the border participated in a table top exercise and a review of the recent Cananea Copper mine spills and train derailment incidents and responses. A key theme that arose from the tabletop exercise and Task Force meeting was the need for increased engagement with the other task forces on mining and other cross-cutting issues. (Jones.bill@epa.gov)

Arizona/Sonora Emergency Response Task Force Meets with Mexican Railway Operator to Enhance Communications. In light of recent train derailments (fortunately no tanks spilled) and as a result of the October Tabletop exercise (see above), Task force leadership met with representatives of Ferrocarril Mexicano (*FerroMex*) on December 3 to discuss the potential for enhancing communication with first responders and assessing opportunities for additional rail incident exercises and training. The consensus was that training should be pursued by bringing the Union Pacific tanker training car (a tanker) to Nogales (ideally into the railyard in Nogales, Sonora) to increase awareness and overall safety. (Jones.bill@epa.gov)



Traffic Incident Management System (TIMS) Train-the-Trainer Course delivered in multiple locations along the Arizona-Sonora Border. Traffic incidents, including crashes, disabled vehicles and debris on the road create unsafe driving conditions; put motorists and responder lives at risk; and account for approximately 25 percent of all traffic delays. Over 150 people were trained at train-the-trainer sessions in San Luis, Rio Rico, and Douglas and are now equipped to train others on the system that provides safe and quick incident clearance, and interoperable communications. (Jones.bill@epa.gov)



Arizona-Sonora Emergency Preparedness Task Force Convenes in Nogales, Sonora. On December 3, over 80 participants celebrated accomplishments from the first two years of Border 2020 and reaffirmed key priorities for 2015-2016. Key discussions included: plans to update the binational Sister City Emergency Response plans; enhanced communication needs; inventorying equipment needs; and prioritizing training and exercise goals. A key highlight included a ceremony to provide additional personal protective equipment (firefighting boots) to Mexican bomberos through a partnership between EPA, NORTHCOM, and Mexican counterparts. At the Arizona-Sonora Workgroup meeting the following day, Ray Sayre, Director, Santa Cruz County office of Emergency Management, donated radiation monitoring equipment (provided by the State of Arizona) to their Mexican counterparts. (Jones.bill@epa.gov)



Carlos Arias, Chief Les Caid, and Ray Sayre during an equipment transfer

to their Mexican counterparts.

Environmental Health

Border Environmental Health Data Compilation Begins. The Public Health Institute was awarded a \$49,000 Border 2020 grant in December to complete an Assessment of Environmental Health Data available in the California/Baja California Border. The project aims to collect and analyze important health data to determine environmental health disparities and priority needs along the U.S.–Mexico border. The project will include a plan of action to replicate this effort in other parts of the border area and help target future environmental health efforts. This report will be a useful tool for guiding EPA priorities. The kick-off meeting took place on December 15th with Dr. Paul English, the Principal Investigator, as well as staff from the California Environmental Health Tracking Program, Region 9’s children’s health coordinator Jackie Menghrajani and Priyanka Pathak Indoor Air Coordinator with the Air Division and Armando Herrerias from the BECC. (Banos.alheli@epa.gov)

Border Program Supports Asthma Awareness Efforts in Imperial County. Border Office staff participated in the annual Stop and Listen Asthma Forum on November 13th to raise awareness and education about asthma and potential disparities in the Imperial Valley. Local high schools competed for the prestigious annual award by showcasing presentations on asthma public service announcements to a panel of judges composed of representatives from the City of Brawley, Imperial County, NGO executive directors, Assembly member Perez and Senator Juan Vargas’ offices, local doctors and school and hospital administrators. The panel of judges scored and selected the winners, which are funded by the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District.



EPA delivered remarks at the event and encouraged participants to actively participate in border task force meetings to provide input on air quality issues in the Imperial County/Mexicali region. The event was organized by the Imperial Valley Child Asthma Program (IVCAP) and sponsored by various local, state and community organizations. (Banos.alheli@epa.gov)

Pesticide Safety Training for Border Stakeholders. On October 28, EPA Border and Pesticides office staff conducted a workshop on Pesticide Safety for 22 promotores (Community Health Workers) in Calexico, CA. The interactive session highlighted the importance of preventing pesticide exposure at home and in the workplace,

with a focus on safety provisions for farmworkers and using an Integrated Pest Management approach to control pests in the home. Also participating for the benefit of the participants, were the agencies that regulate pesticides in California, including the Department of Pesticide Regulation and the Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, as well as the California Department of Public Health's Office of Binational Border Health, and the Mexican Consulate's Ventanillas de Salud.

(Estrada.fabiola@epa.gov)



Healthy Homes Training Course in Valley Center, CA and Tucson, AZ.

Healthy Homes training courses help housing and public health professionals, community health workers, and others develop critical skills to help families eliminate health and safety hazards in homes to create a healthier home environment for children and other occupants. The Children's Environmental Health Program is working with training providers and community partners to offer Healthy Homes training courses this year in states within Region 9. With support from EPA, the City of San Diego had a Community Health Workers course in Valley Center, CA on September 10th and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas held an Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners course in Tucson, AZ on September 16-17. (Menghrajani.jacquelyn@epa.gov)

EPA Engages with stakeholders during Border Binational Health Week and Children's Health Month. On

October 16th, Border Staff and the Children's Health Coordinator participated in a children's health presentation and discussion in San Diego at the binational Border Health Collaborative of the Californias. Participants included binational public health workers, government officials, and stakeholders from San Diego and Imperial Counties, as well as, representatives from Baja California. EPA gave an overview of efforts on children's environmental health, including a binational perspective with examples of environmental health accomplishments along the border. The U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission (BHC) discussed the recently released Collaborative Agreement between EPA under the US-Mexico Border 2020 Program and U.S. Human Health Services (BHC) and current efforts underway to meet those commitments. This activity helps fulfill binational commitments under the Border 2020 program and the Collaboration Agreement with BHC. (Banos.alheli@epa.gov and Menghrajani.jacquelyn@epa.gov)



Promotora Outreach on Proposed Worker Protection Safety Rules. In an effort to include the farmworker community in the regulatory process, EPA presented the proposed changes to the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard to a group of promotores (community health workers) in San Luis, Arizona on August 1st. The promotores are members of Campesinos Sin Fronteras (farmworkers without borders), a community-based organization. The presentation was given in Spanish and in a Train-the-Trainer format for the promotores to deliver the information to their communities. The workshop also included information on general pesticide safety focusing on the importance of reading labels, how to prevent pesticide exposure at home and in the workplace, and where to report pesticide incidents. (Estrada.fabiola@epa.gov)

Agencies Collaborate on U.S-Mexico Border Health Commission.

The EPA Mexico Border Team has been working with the BHC to launch a partnership to improve environmental health along the US-Mexico Border. The partnership identifies areas of collaboration between EPA and the BHC, with particular focus on leveraging each organization's strategic frameworks along the U.S.-Mexico border, including the US-Mexico Border 2020 Program and the BHC's health initiatives. The partnership, captured in a [Collaborative Agreement](#) found on the Border 2020 website, includes tangible commitments, including chemical/pesticide poisoning prevention efforts, creation of pediatric environmental health resource units, and



stakeholder training. The new partnership was announced during a “Power of Collaboration” symposium, sponsored by the BHC on August 7th in San Diego. RA Jared Blumenfeld participated in the Symposium and was part of a federal panel that discussed project and funding efforts along the U.S-Mexico border. (Banos.alheli@epa.gov)

Breaking Barriers Pesticide Inspector Training in San Diego, CA. Approximately 35 inspectors from five counties and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation participated in the Breaking Barriers training covered by the EPA Pesticides Program in San Diego, California on July 16th. The course was originally developed by EPA Region 4 (Atlanta) and was adapted by EPA Region 9 specifically for staff of the California County Agricultural Commissioners. The purpose of the training is to break communication barriers between pesticide inspectors and Latino farmworkers during pesticide inspections. In addition to Spanish language and information on Latino culture, this interactive course includes basic interviewing techniques. (Estrada.fabiola@epa.gov)

New Office of Children’s Health Director at EPA.

Dr. Ruth Etzel will join EPA as the new Director of the [Office of Children’s Health Protection](#) in Washington D.C. Dr. Etzel, is a former practicing pediatrician with over 30 years of experience working on children’s health issues. She was a professor of epidemiology at the University of Wisconsin and from 2009 to 2012, she was Senior Officer for Environmental Health Research at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. Dr. Etzel has served in numerous public-sector leadership positions including: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Founding Chief of the Air Pollution and Respiratory Health Branch), Department of Agriculture (Director of the Division of Epidemiology and Risk Assessment) and Indian Health Service (Research Director at the Alaska Native Medical Center). (Menghrajani.jacquelyn@epa.gov)