



**Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB)
Meeting**

**November 30, 2015
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time**

**Teleconference
Call-in: 866-299-3188, conference code: 2022330068**

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Introductions

*Ann-Marie Gantner, Acting GNEB Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Office of Diversity, Advisory Committee Management and Outreach (ODACMO), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB*

Ms. Ann-Marie Gantner, Acting GNEB DFO, welcomed the participants and thanked them for attending. Ms. Gantner conducted the roll call and announced that the Board members in attendance formed a quorum. A list of participants is included in Appendix A.

Ms. Gantner expressed her gratitude to the reviewers of the draft advice letter who had provided their comments.

Minutes are being taken for this meeting. Ms. Gantner reminded participants to state their names for the record when providing comments during the meeting.

Ms. Gantner then introduced Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair of the GNEB, who welcomed the Board members to the meeting.

Overview of Agenda

Dr. Ganster provided an overview of the agenda, which is included in Appendix B. He proposed that the meeting proceed by first reviewing the recommendations, then discussing other substantive issues, and finally addressing issues of wording. The Board would base its discussion on version 12a of the advice letter, which incorporated all of the reviewer responses received prior to this meeting and was provided to the Board members in the meeting materials.

Public Comments

Ms. Gantner called for public comments. Dr. Paula Stigler-Granados proposed that the Board recommend increased funding for research. Her area of expertise is surveillance of vector-borne disease. More funding is needed to address this issue. Dr. Ganster responded that funding for research was addressed in the advice letter, but such a recommendation tends to be longer term. The full report will discuss research in greater detail.

Written comments from the public are included in Appendix C.

Discussion and Approval of Draft Report

Recommendations

Dr. Ganster stated that the recommendations in the advice letter had focused on those that could be implemented or begun during the current fiscal year. Longer term recommendations will be reserved for the full report, which will be prepared by the Board in 2016.

p.13, Lines 24–26 and Lines 27–29

Ms. Gantner noted that the fourth and fifth recommendations had been added by EPA. A Board member asked the meaning of the acronym “IWRM” (i.e., integrated wastewater resource management). Mr. Stephen Niemeyer responded that the acronym was defined in the body of the advice letter. Mr. Michael Migliori voiced his approval for the inclusion of the reference to living shorelines, which is one of the priorities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Dr. Margaret Wilder commented that the recommendations were well-written and specific.

Dr. Wilder proposed that the Board place greater emphasis on green infrastructure in its recommendations. She characterized the second recommendation as being somewhat vague in that regard; enhancing stormwater harvesting could have multiple meanings. Although green infrastructure was mentioned in the fifth recommendation, she favored including it as a stand-alone recommendation to convey that it should be a primary priority.

Resolutions: For clarity, IWRM will be defined.

To emphasize the importance of green infrastructure, an additional recommendation will be added after line 26: “Promote and incentivize green infrastructure and prioritize its financing for both domestic and binational projects.”

p.13, Line 33

Dr. Keith Pezzoli emphasized the need to consider how the design of physical infrastructure improvements will contribute to climate-associated risks, particularly at points of entry. Dr. Pohlman responded that existing executive orders and guidelines, including Executive Order 13514 (Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance), already incorporate mandates for sustainable design. She acknowledged, however, that security concerns, rather than green infrastructure, tend to be primary in the design of ports of entry. Reemphasizing the need for green infrastructure would be acceptable, but the Board should acknowledge existing executive orders that mandate sustainability and the consideration of climate change in design.

Dr. Ganster noted that community concerns should be reflected in the design as well. Ongoing concerns exist that the design of ports of entry does not consider pedestrian mobility sufficiently.

Dr. Pezzoli commented that the benefits of green infrastructure are broader than decreased wait times and include aesthetics, energy efficiency and carbon sequestration. Dr. Ganster replied that concern about wait times was noted in the body of the advice letter, and the broader benefits of green infrastructure could be expanded on in the full report.

Resolution: The Board will change “Enable the federal agencies plan” to “Using existing Executive Orders, and reflecting community concerns, continue to support, plan and design.”

p.14, Lines 1–2

Dr. Teresa Pohlman pointed out that the Department of Energy (DOE) was the only federal agency mentioned in the recommendations by name. Ms. Carol Battershell suggested that the recommendation be generalized to “all federal agencies.” Mr. Jose Angel advocated for making recommendations specific to particular agencies whenever possible (e.g., flow in the Rio Grande, which is under the jurisdiction of the International Boundary and Water Commission). Dr. Ganster responded that a more general approach was taken in the advice letter because of the complexity of federal activities. Dr. David Eaton added that the body of the letter contains specific references to particular federal agencies, but the recommendations were intended to be less detailed.

Ms. Edna Mendoza noted that the recommendation did not account for the economic realities of the border regions. She suggested that it be expanded to recommend increased support for energy efficiency and security initiatives. Mr. Scott Storment explained that the energy working group had proposed this recommendation, and communities could anticipate that savings would be derived from enhanced energy efficiency.

Resolution: To generalize the recommendations to all federal agencies and express the need for support for the initiatives, the Board will change the text as follows (inserted text italicized and marked in red, struck changes marked with strikethrough): “~~DOE, along with other agencies,~~*All federal agencies* should target border urban and rural communities to enhance *and increase support for ...*”

Body of the Advice Letter

Dr. Ganster noted that some references are still missing. He will supply them as needed before the advice letter is submitted.

p.1, Line 15

Mr. Angel raised the issue of why the term “climate risks” rather than “climate change” was used when “climate change” had been used in previous reports. Mr. Niemeyer responded that Texas and Arizona might object to the use of the term. Ms. Mendoza noted that “climate change” was used frequently elsewhere in the advice letter. Arizona will not object to the term if the causes of climate change are not discussed. Dr. Pohlman stated that “climate resilience” is the new term of art. Dr. Pezzoli clarified that he had commented on the semantics of using “climate risks” because the impacts are from climate change, not climate risks. Mr. Niemeyer and Ms. Mendoza withdrew their objections to using the term “climate change” at this location in the text.

Mr. Niemeyer noted that Texas had had general reservations about the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) charge to the Board to consider the environmental impacts of climate change. He questioned the appropriateness of the CEQ giving direction to the GNEB, which is chartered as an independent advisory committee. Mr. Mark Joyce, Associate Director, ODACMO, clarified that the GNEB offers independent advice but is not free to address any issue; the Board is asked to address topics of interest to the agency that supports it (i.e., EPA).

Resolution: The Board will insert the word “change” after “climate.”

p. 1, Lines 42–44

Dr. Ganster commented that the Board had added the sentence to the end of the advice letter but neglected to delete it from its original location.

Resolution: The Board will delete the sentence beginning, “Mr. President ...”.

p. 5, Lines 25–27

Ms. Mendoza objected to this sentence because it refers to unauthorized immigrants as residents and conveys the impression that the risks to unauthorized immigrant residents is solely a problem in southern Arizona. She noted that the sentence had not been included in the version of the advice letter that she had circulated for approval. Dr. Ganster explained that the sentence had been added by the health working group to reflect the increased vulnerability to high heat and pollution of lower income groups, particularly unauthorized immigrants. The Board discussed possible edits to the sentence, including changing “unauthorized immigrant residents” to “unauthorized immigrants”; changing “unauthorized immigrant residents” to a more general term describing lower income people; and deleting the specific reference to southern Arizona, particularly because it was unclear whether the study cited included other locations. The author of the sentence was not present to provide further explanation, and Mr. Niemeyer observed that the reference was accepted but had not yet appeared in print so could not be consulted. Several Board members proposed deleting the sentence from the advice letter, reserving the option to include a reference to the study in the full report.

Resolution: The Board will delete the sentence beginning, “Furthermore, unauthorized immigrants ...”.

p. 5, Lines 41–43

Mr. Jose Velasco recommended including specific reference to collaborative agreements among federal agencies because of past successes of such agreements with capacity building in impacted communities. He cited the positive impacts of training *promotores* and local leaders in a collaboration between the U.S.-México Border Health Commission and EPA, as well as a successful collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration on drug abuse and mental health. Both collaborations had strong positive impacts at the community level. Mr. Luis Olmedo noted that some populations are difficult to reach with information about such issues as climate change, energy efficiency and water quality. Community health workers, community outreach workers and *promotores* have proven effective in reaching such populations. Dr. Ganster replied that throughout the letter, the focus on communities was retained. He suggested that more detail about *promotores* be provided in the full report. Dr. Ganster added that the message that federal agencies need to provide leadership for transborder cooperation also is conveyed in the advice letter.

Dr. Pezzoli suggested including civic organizations, as he had suggested for a similar list on page 1 of the advice letter. The designation “civic organization” could be understood to include nonprofit organizations, consortia, networks, alliances and other similar entities. Mr. Olmedo noted that civic organizations might have specific models for reaching hard-to-reach populations, and including a reference to “civic organizations” would address this issue.

Resolution: To reflect the importance of collaboration, including with civic organization, the Board will insert text (italicized and marked in red) so that the sentence will read as follows, “These initiatives include federal actions, cooperative programs with *international organizations, bilateral organizations, U.S. states, local governments, tribal communities, civic organizations* and the private sector, as well as trans-boundary cooperation with Mexico.”

p.7, Line 23

Mr. Angel noted that a reviewer had questioned the link between trash and climate change. He indicated that during peak flows associated with storms, trash is flushed into surface waters. Dr. Ganster added that the increased intensity of storm events resulting from climate change will exacerbate trash problems. Ms. Mendoza noted that trash also is a stormwater management issue.

Resolution: The Board made no change.

p. 8, Lines 36–37

Mr. Jonathan Andrew expressed his approval of addressing the issue of adequate ecological flows, which is a priority of the Department of the Interior, in the advice letter.

Resolution: The Board made no change.

p. 10, Line 31

Ms. Battershell had commented that national energy demands are declining, and for the advice letter to assert that border energy needs are growing, a reference should be provided. Mr. Storment clarified that the population of the border region is growing, creating a growing need for industrial and general energy. Dr. Ganster confirmed that previous GNEB reports have documented that the population in the border region is growing faster than in the rest of the Nation. Ms. Battershell concurred that a growing population will require its energy needs to be met, and the rephrased statement would not require documentation.

Resolution: The Board will change “growing energy needs” to “energy needs of the growing population.”

p.10, Line 36

Ms. Mendoza indicated that the change that had been made in the recommendations section addressed her comment, which suggested the need for increased funding, rather than just outreach, based on the economic reality of border communities. Some communities cannot even afford air conditioning. Mr. Olmedo noted that used air conditioning systems might be more affordable than new ones but less energy efficient. Mr. Storment commented that a reference to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, as well as the reference to other grant programs at the end of the Energy section, had been added. These programs meet the requirement for inclusion in the advice letter of focusing on what can be achieved in the current fiscal year. He proposed that the full report place a high priority on developing new funding streams.

Resolution: The Board made no additional change.

p. 10, Line 37

Ms. Battershell had commented that the DOE is not structured to conduct physical outreach around the country, but could provide educational materials, as well as speak at regional events and conferences. Mr. Storment proposed adding “at regional events and conferences” after the word “information.” Ms. Battershell indicated that the phrase would be acceptable to the DOE because it does not commit the agency to conducting community-by-community outreach. Mr. Olmedo noted that disadvantaged communities rarely participate in conferences, hence the need for outreach to hard-to-reach populations.

Resolution: The Board will add “at regional events and conferences” after the word “information.”

p.10, Lines 41-44

In response to the comment asking why energy efficiency and photovoltaic (PV) solar projects were chosen, Mr. Storment explained that PV solar projects have a dramatically shorter time for deployment than wind and geothermal energy. Ms. Battershell responded that no reference is needed if further explanation of the statement is provided, such as indicating that the timeframe for PV solar projects is approximately 1 year, whereas wind and geothermal projects are much longer term. More detail can be provided in the full report.

Resolution: To clarify that solar projects provide nearer term benefits compared with other types of renewable energy, Mr. Storment and Ms. Abram will provide to the Chair text to replace the sentence beginning “For example ...”.

p.11, Lines 6-11

Ms. Laura Abram commented that the two sentences appeared to be focused on water rather than energy; therefore, they did not fit in the Energy section. Ms. Battershell responded that some programs generate energy from wastewater by extracting heat or biomass. Mr. Samuel Coleman added that energy use by wastewater treatment systems also is an important issue.

Resolution: Mr. Coleman will provide to the Chair text describing energy use and recovery by wastewater treatment plants to replace the sentence beginning “As pipes...”.

p. 11, Line 15

Ms. Battershell stated that the comment had been addressed by adding “U.S.” before “border states.”

Resolution: The Board made no additional change.

p. 11, Lines 17-21

EPA had commented that the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program was not related to reducing energy use. Mr. Coleman indicated that it was a general comment and that no change was necessary.

Resolution: The Board made no change.

Approval of the Draft Advice Letter

Ms. Gantner called for additional comments from the chairs of the working groups. Mr. Angel, Dr. Rebecca Palacios, Dr. Pohlman and Ms. Sylvia Grijalva had no additional comments. Ms. Grijalva noted that all federal members will be recusing their agencies from the advice letter. Mr. Niemeyer indicated that Texas might recuse itself from the letter as well. Ms. Gantner asked Mr. Niemeyer to provide her with Texas’ decision on recusal by December 1.

The Board voted to approve the advice letter with the changes approved at this meeting. Dr. Ganster thanked the Board members for their work on the letter and flexibility in accommodating the varying perspectives among the members.

Next Steps

Editing

Ms. Gantner indicated that Dr. Ganster would ensure that all changes are incorporated into the advice letter.

Following the incorporation of comments, the contractor, The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc., will copyedit the advice letter. The final draft will be completed by December 9. Ms. Gantner will distribute the edited advice letter to the Board members.

Transmittal to the President

EPA has scheduled a meeting with the CEQ for December 15, 2015, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time to transmit the letter. Ms. Gantner invited the Board members to attend via teleconference, if they are not local, or in person, if they are based in Washington, D.C. Mr. Coleman indicated that he will be travelling to Washington, D.C., and might be able to attend in person. Ms. Gantner will send details about the meeting to the Board members.

Other Issues

Ms. Gantner indicated that after the advice letter is transmitted, the Board will begin to plan its face-to-face meeting in February 2016. Dr. Ganster suggested that the Board members who raised topics that need more detailed treatment in the full report make a note to themselves to present those topics for discussion at the face-to-face meeting.

Adjournment

Ms. Gantner thanked the participants and the working group chairs for their efforts and participation. Mr. Joyce added his appreciation of the efforts of the Board, particularly in view of the compressed schedule for writing the letter, and observed that the advice letter will provide a sound foundation for the full report.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m. Eastern Time.

Action Items

- ◇ Dr. Ganster will supply missing references as needed.
- ◇ Mr. Stormont and Ms. Abram will provide to the Chair text to clarify that solar projects provide nearer term benefits compared with other types of renewable energy by December 1.
- ◇ Mr. Coleman will provide to the Chair text describing energy use and recovery by wastewater treatment plants by December 1.
- ◇ Mr. Niemeyer will inform Ms. Gantner regarding Texas' decision on whether to recuse itself from the advice letter by December 1.
- ◇ Dr. Ganster will ensure that all changes approved at this meeting are incorporated into the advice letter.

- ◇ SCG will copyedit the advice letter by December 9. Ms. Gantner will distribute the edited advice letter to the Board members.
- ◇ EPA will transmit the advice letter to the CEQ at a meeting scheduled for December 15, 2015, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Prior to the meeting, Ms. Gantner will provide further information on the meeting location and participation via teleconference to the Board members.
- ◇ Board members who raised topics that need more detailed treatment in the full report should make a note to themselves to present those topics for discussion at the February 2016 face-to-face meeting.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Good Neighbor Environmental Board

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 Representatives

Laura Abram

Director, Public Affairs
First Solar, Inc.
San Francisco, CA

Jose L. Angel

Assistant Executive Officer
California Regional Water Quality Control
Board, Region 7
State Water Resources Control Board
Palm Desert, CA

Lauren Baldwin, LEED-GA

Sustainability Program Specialist
City Manager's Department
Office of Resilience and Sustainability
City of El Paso
El Paso, TX

Evaristo Cruz

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

David J. Eaton, Ph.D.

Bess Harris Jones Centennial Professor
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

Carrie Hamblen

Executive Director
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce
Las Cruces, NM

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
Tucson, AZ

Jack Monger

Executive Director
Industrial Environmental Association
Coronado, CA

Luis Olmedo

Executive Director
Comite Civico Del Valle, Inc.
Brawley, CA

Rebecca L. Palacios, Ph.D.

Associate Professor
Public Health Sciences
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM

Keith Pezzoli, Ph.D.
Professor of Teaching
Director, Urban Studies and Planning Program
Department of Communication
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA

Cyrus Reed
Conservation Director
Sierra Club, Lone Star Chapter
Austin, TX

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E.
Chairman/Commissioner
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Austin, TX

Thomas Skibitski
Chief, Emergency Response Operations
Office of the Secretary
New Mexico Environment Department
Albuquerque, NM

Federal Members

Department of Agriculture
Salvador Salinas
State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Temple, TX

Department of Energy
Carol Battershell
Deputy Director
Energy Policy and Systems Analysis
Washington D.C.

Department of Health and Human Services
Jose Luis Velasco
Executive Director
U.S. Section, U.S.-México Border Health
Commission
El Paso, TX

Department of Homeland Security
Teresa R. Pohlman, Ph.D., LEED, AP
Executive Director
Sustainability and Environmental Programs
Undersecretary for Management
Washington, D.C.

Scott D. Storment
Principal
Green Hub Advisors, LLC
San Antonio, TX

Margaret Wilder, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Geography and Development
Center for Latin American Studies
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

Francisco Zamora-Arroyo, Ph.D.
Director
Colorado River Delta Legacy Program
Sonoran Institute
Tucson, AZ

Department of State
Rachel M. Poynter
Acting Director
Office of Mexican Affairs
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Department of the Interior
Jonathan Andrew
Interagency Borderlands Coordinator
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C.

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

Environmental Protection Agency
Samuel Coleman, P.E.
Deputy Regional Administrator
Region 6
Dallas, TX

*International Boundary and Water
Commission*

Ed Drusina
Commissioner
United States Section
El Paso, TX

Designated Federal Officer

Ann-Marie Gantner
Acting Designated Federal Officer
Good Neighbor Environmental Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C.

Federal and State Agency Alternates

*Department of Commerce--National Oceanic
and Atmospheric Administration*

Michael Migliori
Program Specialist
Stewardship Division
Silver Spring, MD

Department of Health and Human Services

Lori Navarrete, M.P.H.
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Department of State

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*International Boundary and Water
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International Boundary and Water Commission,
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Washington, D.C.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Stephen M. Niemeyer, P.E.
Border Affairs Manager and Colonias
Coordinator
Intergovernmental Relations Division
Austin, TX

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters Participants

Mark Joyce
Associate Director
Office of Diversity, Advisory Committee
Management and Outreach
Washington, D.C.

Other Participants

Paula Stigler-Granados

Assistant Professor

The University of Texas Health Science Center

San Antonio, TX

Contractor Support

Jennifer Lee, Ph.D.

Science Writer/Editor

The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc.

Gaithersburg, MD

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda



Good Neighbor Environmental Board

Agenda

Monday, November 30, 2014

11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (EST)

Call-in: 866-299-3188, conference code: 2022330068

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|------------------------|--|
| 11:00 a.m. | Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ann-Marie Gantner
Acting Designated Federal Officer
Office of Diversity, Advisory Committee Management and Outreach• Paul Ganster
Chair
Good Neighbor Environmental Board• Board Introductions |
| 11:15 – 11:25 a.m. | Overview of Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul Ganster
Chair
Good Neighbor Environmental Board |
| 11:25 – 11:45 a.m. | Public Comments |
| 11:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. | Discussion and Approval of the Draft Report |
| 2:30 – 2:45 p.m. | Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Editing• Transmittal to the President |
| 2:45 – 3:00 p.m. | Other Issues |
| 3:00 p.m. | Adjournment |

Appendix C: Written Public Comments

Paula Stigler-Granados

I just wanted to add a few additional comments:

Under air pollution:

- Suggest adding in language for electrified truck stops for those trucks waiting in line at the crossing. I know Dave Fege (U.S. EPA) did some significant looking into on this topic if you need more info [sic].

Overall:

- I see mention of more vulnerable populations listed once under the emergency preparedness piece which is great. I think there is potential for more mention of environmental justice in the letter, emphasizing the impact of climate change on those most vulnerable. Reference the Climate Gap article by Morello-Frosch and Pasteur for more info [sic]. As stated in the beginning 10 of the poorest counties are along the border, I think though there is room to sprinkle this more throughout.

These minutes are an accurate description of the matters discussed during this meeting.



Paul Ganster
Chair
Good Neighbor Environmental Board

12/11/2015
Date

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board was created by the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Act of 1992. The board is responsible for providing advice to the President and Congress on environmental and infrastructure issues and needs within the states contiguous to Mexico. The findings and recommendations of the Board do not represent the views of the Agency, and this document does not represent information approved or disseminated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

