

November 7, 2001

Commission for Environmental Cooperation
393, Rue St-Jacques Ouest
Bureau 200
Montreal, Quebec
H2Y 1N9 Canada

Re: Program Plan 2002-2004

Dear Dr. Ferretti:

The Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy (SCERP), a consortium of ten U.S. and Mexican universities, is pleased to comment on the 2002-2004 program plan. SCERP began binational environmental research, policy development, education and training, and local capacity building in 1989. We have successfully completed over 200 projects and are currently engaged in several program areas which closely parallel your cores program areas.

We also sponsor the annual Border Institute think tank, convening the 100 key regional stakeholders in an informed discussion of a topic. At Border Institute I we established the most likely population projections for the border region and made everyone aware that doubling in 20 years made the region the fastest growing in all North America. At Institute II we focused on environmental infrastructure needs assessments and innovative means to finance the extraordinary and still rapidly growing deficit. Our efforts resulted in a municipal bond market in Mexico. This year at Institute III we focused on trade, energy, and environment nexus and realized that while industry was fast looking towards the border region to provide electricity for the growing United States demand, there was no binational planning, or incentive to develop the renewable sources which abound on both sides of the border. Institute IV in 2002 will focus on water. Concurrently, we are involved in developing a predictive and decision-support system for the binational region that shows consequences of various policy options in the areas of air, water, energy, demographics, economics, quality of life, land use, transportation, and ecosystems.

We have keyed our comments below to your program sections. I have highlighted issues where we are prepared to contribute to your efforts.

1.1.1. We participated as a panelist at the first North America symposium assessing linkages between trade and the environment and welcome your **call for papers** as well as session panel **chair responsibilities** at the next symposium.

1.2.2. We dedicated the third in our Border Institute series to the issue of Trade, Energy, and the Environment realizing that there was little incentive or investment in renewable energy sources which abound in the border region or in efficient use of electricity by either private homeowners and industry. We are reviewing papers for you in preparation for the North American electricity study and welcome the opportunity to testify at the **North American Electricity Market conference** on renewable energy and efficiencies.

2.1.4. After years of individual **GIS projects on basins and watersheds**, we developed a entire research program on watersheds and are now assessing impacts from upland contribution on estuarine and near-shore marine environments.

3.1.1. and 3.1.2. SCERP has partnered with MIT, WGA, WRAP and others but especially the Joint Advisory Council of the Paso del Norte and the Binational Air Quality Alliance of San Diego-Tijuana in preparation for the North American Air Quality meeting. We have specialized in transboundary **airshed characterization and attribution** studies and binational air emission permit trades.

3.1.3. Our **border congestion air quality**, fleet, and activity studies have focused on trajectories, fates, and effects to local communities from this mobile but ironically stationary contribution.

3.4.1 and 3.4.2. Our extensive **lead** (from packaging materials, foods, paints and pigments) research and outreach efforts are aimed at reducing risks for women and children.

With the exception of relatively meager funds dedicated to biodiversity issues, we commend your plan and look forward to working with you in the future.

Regards,

D. Rick Van Schoik

Copy:
Scott Vaughan
Greg Block
Laura Durazo