

Border 2012 Summary of Comments

BORDER 2012
Centro Cultural Universitario
Cd. Juarez, Chih.
November 18, 2002

Greetings and Introduction

MC – This new effort between both countries begins with a meeting like this one along the border through the community. Through a consultation with all of you we are trying to have a basis derived from the 1983 La Paz Agreement. Goals, solutions to problems to be identified and prioritized. Welcome to this public hearing.

I would like to introduce our guests:

David Chacon – PROFEPA Federal Delegate

Jesus Alfredo Delgado – Mayor Ciudad Juarez

Jose Luis Canales de la Vega – Urban Development

Jose Treviño – State Delegate SEMARNAT

Gloria Dominguez – Director Ecology State Government

Diana Borja – Border Affairs Coordinator TCEQ

Gina Weber – Border Affairs Coordinator, EPA Region 6

Gedi Cibas – Similar position in New Mexico

Alma Leticia Figueroa – Office of Ecology and Civil Protection, Juarez

Mr. Escudero- AMAC

Dr. Carlos Rincon- EDF

Juan José H – Secretariat of Foreign Relations

Sergio Borunda – Tax Collector

Araceli Verduzco Dominguez- Communications State Congress

Chief Rivera – Commander El Paso Fire Department

Juan Guadalupe Sandoval – Commander Juarez Fire Department

Daniel Chacon – PROFEPA Delegate – Today is a very important day for our border communities, a new cycle begins. For the benefit of future generations we have to think about health problems derived from environmental pollution. Up until now the programs resulting have been translated into works but we still have a lot of work. This should be a proposal that starts from the grassroots and should be orchestrated to improve quality of life and the border environment. With this new horizon of hope, I am very happy to open this binational region to a public hearing. Thank you.

Jesus Alfredo Delgado – Mayor Cd. Juarez – Today is a very important day for border cities, counties, tribes, cities or municipalities, in Mexico as well as in the United States. It is important because we are starting a new cycle in the effort to improve public health and the quality of the environment in this binational region. We need for this new program to channel and approach multiple tasks that we should carry out to improve the

quality of life and environment in border communities in order to take advantage of available resources and not duplicate efforts.

Roberto Cano – Presentation of the next stages of the Program and integration of regional workgroups. The mechanics for this hearing include: the presentation of the Border 2012 Program, then we will have a presentation on next steps. All of you received a basic document, spend some time reading it. These sheets will be collected to randomly select comments during this meeting. We want to do it this way, however, we will give all of you the opportunity to participate during these two and a half hours in order for this meeting to be as beneficial as possible.

VIDEO

I would like to acknowledge EPA's assistance in providing simultaneous interpretation services.

Guadalupe Dominguez - Director Ecology for the State – As we have heard the regional work groups are the basis for the Border 2012 Program. These groups will coordinate activities at a regional level and will support the efforts and tasks of local groups.

The community very well represents this forum. Solutions are defined, prioritized and we look for solutions to environmental issues that affect each region. I am going to describe the mechanics that the Texas, New Mexico, Chihuahua regional workgroup will follow. The details will have to be defined by the group once it has been constituted. The groups will be organized during an initial meeting after both governments have signed off on the Border 2012 program. We expect work to begin in this region in early 2003. We need a list of people interested in participating. We will look for people representative of the community, binational organizations such as BECC and NADBank, NGO's, academia, private sector and other community organizations. Next, each workgroup will prioritize relevant environmental issues that affect communities in each region. At the same time these groups will establish groups with specific tasks, who will implement specific projects by topic or by region. The regional groups will submit a report at the end of 2003 and then every two years where they will document the progress of the activities and proposals for regional groups and their own task groups.

After the Border XXI program concluded we have received proposals and information from border communities interested in improving border programs, as well as related issues that need attention.

I will share with you the feedback that we have received from these forums and roundtables that have been taken place along the border, since the end of 2000 until the present: contingency planning, emergency response, civil protection, hazardous materials and waste management and transportation, water resources, - quality and quantity-, air quality, energy, environmental health, NAFTA environmental impact, access to environmental information and public education.

Daniel Chacon: As you can see there is still a lot of work to be done, therefore it is important that you register and all of us help each other and solve border problems.

If you will allow me, the Municipal Mayor Jesus Alfredo Delgado who has been with us has to leave, but we want to ask him to participate in this Border 2012 program.

COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

El Paso Fire Department – the Border 2012 Program emphasizes the need to plan for contingencies. This region is characterized by an important number of hazardous waste and chemical substances therefore, binational coordination is important. The emergency planning institutions should know what are the resources they have available, who will be in charge of coordination, who are the stakeholders. We should fine tune details such as life insurance policies (in case of a death related fatality). A plan is needed. Agreements to transfer equipment. What are the resources and risks in Juarez, what are the necessary resources, who will help us in Juarez? My proposal is that we carry out this binational contingency plan. Who will make the decisions? Is the plan going to be activated at a federal, state or local level? We also need to address other issues. We need to have a well-established plan before anything happens.

Alfonso Iracheta – Mexican Network of Cities Towards Sustainability – The Border 2012 Program has a very sectorial approach, but it seems that a territorial approach is needed. We need to incorporate other political factors to the urban development element, use of soil. Where is the coordination with the Northern Border Commission? We need integrated proposals with regards to water, soil, and air; with regards to everything else and to recognize if they are related to the environment. How can the maquiladora be integrated to this program? What is being done with automobiles? What we need is a series of projects to respond to different issues authorized to be used in meetings like this one. Each project should have a person responsible for designated funds.

Roberto Hurtado Jimenez- COLEF Aqua XXI – Criticism regarding the document: I feel that in general terms this is a consistent document. I feel the goals as well as the percentages are poor. Maybe it is not good to talk about percentages at the end of 2012, but progressive advances along the Program.

Adrian Gerardo Lopez – JMAS - Need for drought contingency plan.

Jorge Salas Plata – Go more in depth towards what was mentioned previously. I found the document to be very poor. It is not sufficient for ten years of work. The document has the wrong paradigm. How are we going to carry out the mission with an expansion growth? It briefly mentions aspects that there are political and social contradictions, etc. What are these types of issues? They are not mentioned, what is the long-term vision? It is not mentioned either. The regions cannot progress if all the necessary aspects, for this border initiative to work, are not included.

My conclusion is that: it is not EPA nor SEMARNAT the organizations that can head this initiative because they cannot be judge and jury. EPA and SEMARNAT design, organize, propose, listen to the comments and finally present the final proposal. I propose that this round of border meetings be concluded by gathering some perspectives, -I hope mine also-, and that these two organizations leave in your hands a border environmental congress or a conference where the social representatives, universities research centers, community organizations and the media are present. The paradigm that is not working in this type of Border Programs should change.

Mario Gaytan Alcocer – Academic – The concrete proposal that we have is to establish biological and mathematical models with which we can make a concrete evaluation of certain environmental problems. The university has granted a budget, -very modest of course- but with that we are developing thesis work in the environmental field. Here at the university these types of issues concern us and we are looking for academic solutions and to combine them with social goals.

Margarita Villegas – Bellavista Neighborhood Committee – We propose that we receive human, technical and mechanical assistance to protect the environment in our community. We are close to the river and during the draught we see that the river is a garbage dump.

Due to the immigration towards the US, there are abandoned houses and they become infection concerns. We propose that people that really want to live in them use these abandoned houses.

Every year, we as neighbors clean the river with assistance from the government who sends machinery. We want to preserve our environment for us and for future generations.

Francisco Lopez - Praxedis Municipality – Our proposal is that with regards to water and air pollution, and in existing laws to improve these situations that are really implemented.

Noel Rivera- Mexican Green Ecology Party – The dates mentioned in the brochure are at a very long term. We propose that you establish shorter-term goals.

Salvador Perez Chacon – Philips – The start-up is very valuable and we should not waste time in designing something new but optimize as we go along. There should be a site where the whole community could have access. It is necessary to start a series of evaluations and statistical measurements especially with regards to our area of influence. It is also important for the social groups to get involved and for EPA, SEMARNAT, and PROFEPA, municipal government, state government, etc., to participate. We should install a measurement system with defined goals and objectives and a mathematical measurement and follow-up system and publication of results. Also, assign specific tasks and goals with groups of persons or organizations. Time is of vital importance, we cannot waste a minute. Everything should be sustainable, the economic, political and social aspects should be considered.

On behalf of my organization I put at your disposal an evaluation, measurement, mathematical system that has already been successfully tested all over the world that can be adapted to the plans and projects being discussed in this room today. I invite all those of you present to participate with faith and enthusiasm. I believe that the greatest risk that this program has is the polarization of our ideological, social and political beliefs. We should identify a common language achievable by all; we should take into consideration that we are two countries, three states, and several municipalities. There are representatives from every type of ideological beliefs, every type of ecological beliefs. We should unify our way of thinking in order for the project to be a success and that in a year, at the end of ten years we celebrate the success and total realization of all and each one of the projects and the scope of all the goals. This is a personal task but it is also a group task. Thank you very much.

Rafael Corral Diaz – The Border 2012 Program does not mention the other component of natural resources that area fauna and flora. Why are they not included?

Salvador Gonzalez Ayala - IMIP- There is a need to have a comprehensive approach. We should take into consideration the needs that the community has. Use the existing studies and proposed programs. We have to approach the issues of particles, there are studies, we have available concrete solutions in terms of regulatory structure, etc. that is all, thank you very much.

Alberto Ramirez – BECC – The goals established are very specific. What would be the participation of international institutions? What resources do they bring with them? What is the role that BECC and NADBank's goal will play in this Border 2012 Program?

Maria Aurora Ortega- Chemical Engineers Environmental Institute – Two areas that were not included. We propose that a specific distribution of the region be made within the environmental education programs for universities. I would like to start from the basis, preparatory, secondary at a national level, because we have environmental problems all over the world. If we do not involve our teachers in the environmental aspect, it will be difficult to consider them as part of the practical solutions that should be included. The lack of knowledge of environmental issues is precisely what makes people not get involved.

Angelica Licón Ortega – ITESM – The main enemies that the environment has are ignorance and poverty. I also think that EPA and SEMARNAT will not be able to handle these problems by themselves, they need many institutions and universities, as well as NGO's but social where they are not judge nor jury as I think EPA and SEMARNAT could be. There is a great difference between environmental resources from the US and Mexico. We do not have resources like US. You can see that the solution is in your hands; we cannot do too much without your help. And as long as people think that we are the back yard I don't think we can do much. Thank you.

Carlos Rincon – EDF – I would like to congratulate you and congratulate all of us; the task that we have before us is a greater reason why we should congratulate ourselves. I

invite all of you that besides having this participation to send our written suggestions that will be even more effective. My participation is more proactive, more of joining efforts. We have to reach a form of alliance in order to make progress. What I am going to send to the Program are three specific issues: one, we need to incorporate the financial element in order to develop the environmental initiative; two, we have to create the air quality district, we need to have a comprehensive, holistic approach to improve the development and well-being of the community; third, it has to do with water and air in border cities and communities; it should have a regional approach in the work groups.

Carlos Meraz – Wastewater in Juarez, we do not know if we have a primary treatment and the wastewater treatment is not complete. It is affecting communities downstream, if we do not have a complete treatment due to financial issues, the Board (Water Board) does not have the financial capability to do it even though they are carrying out the paperwork for a secondary treatment.

The drainage system that takes water to the plants has a considerable development of weeds that hosts many insects that cause diseases.

All of us are role players and all of us can be affected by not participating. I hope that this draft is expanded with the participations we have heard here, taking into consideration social and economic aspects.

Javier Chavez – UACJ – I will participate with two issues that I believe were already mentioned but I believe they are very important. The first is, that we should work in the education sector, mainly the university. We cannot continue thinking that we will improve the environment if we do not work as citizens. We should design programs that take this information to the education groups.

The other issue is that the results should be made known in more colloquial terms, more common; take out the technical aspect in the reports. Have monthly scheduled guidance for the duration of this program in order not to have meetings and forums to which not even one percent of the population is present. Promote in the media. We can provide valuable information through the media.

Ing. Ramiro Velez – Municipal Civil Protection – Have very good knowledge of the current conditions of our environment. We need an inventory of hazardous materials. What do we have? What is being transported? We have many challenges with regards to used oil; a lot of it is poured down the drain. We should look for an alternative in order to dispose of this oil.

Daniel Villa – This is a suggestion, we are disposing of organic waste that can be used as fertilizer.

Janos Mayor – I am just learning about the Border 2012 Program. In Janos we are also looking for ways to protect the environment, we are willing to continue searching for this type of Programs.

Manuel Duarte Cano – Environmental Solutions – Ecological culture is very important. The construction of schools, institutions for ecological culture.

Armando Torres - Products and Services – We receive water contamination through the river. We also receive air pollution. This contamination should be mentioned within the plan's strategy in order to reduce contamination in the border. That is precisely our proposal, to work in coordination with all the country.

Margarita Villegas – Bellavista Neighborhood Committee – I would like to thank you for inviting us to battle together for healthy communities because those who will be more benefited will be our children.

Biologist Francisco Felix – The study and the political obligation are development plans in the cities and we need to work very hard on diseases, if we can prevent things with adequate development plans, adapted to the economy and natural resources.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Gina Weber – The most important thing in this Program is public participation and we would like for you to send us more information in order to develop the Program. We are interested in receiving your comments because without you this program cannot be successful. This draft document is available to the public, so that you can give us your comments, but this was not the most difficult task, the most difficult task is what comes next. We have to form workgroups in the regions and those workgroups are going to address all the comments that you submitted. Thank you very much.

Diana Borja – Thank you for the opportunity to be here. The border is in the middle of a region, we are in the edge of two countries and three states, but as air, as birds we are in one region. We have made a lot of progress and together we can make more progress and that is going to be very successful. Thank you.

Gedi Cibas – Thank you for coming to this meeting. New Mexico's perspective is that the way of thinking with regards to the new program is one more structure to think in a logical manner. We should accept different perspectives, different objectives because we have two countries, three states and many communities. This is a preliminary draft and little by little it will become a dynamic document, we will develop the perspectives and find out which are the issues that affect the community the most. The communities themselves have a great responsibility from the leadership perspective; we need leaders that help form work groups in the community in order to help think about issues, which should be very concrete. Thank you for participating.

Javier Canales – I believe that is very important that these issues are grounded, that they become practical and tangible in order for them to be more effective. We should be aware of the concrete aspects of communities and develop them. There are very expensive environmental studies for El Paso, New Mexico and Juarez. Practical, fast and

concise solutions should be implemented that can be carried out at short and medium term.

Ing. José Treviño – SEMARNAT – This is a great opportunity in this type of forums. There are local leaders and state representations. The solution to the border problems is a shared solution by all of us here. The border is unique; we do not see the border as two countries. Thank you very much your participation has been very valuable because this document will include all those concerns, searching for joint solutions to problems that we have here in the border. Thank you. We declare this public meeting closed.