Border 2012 Summary of Comments

Border 2012/Frontera 2012
National City CA
11/07/2002

1. Welcome/Introductions

EPA & CAL EPA Representatives

Senator Filner.

Addressing the border issues;
Focusing on the environmental problems that involve, San Diego, Tijuana, Mexicali, Arizona and adding the Imperial County. Imperial County; faces serious air pollution resulting in a high incidence of asthmatic disease in children,

- Also one issue that is being addressed is the agreement that is going to clean the Tijuana River, for the first time in the last 50 years.
- The ABC plan: that will produce energy in compliance of all the regulations of environmental health for both sides of the border.
- Improvement of relationships on both sides of the border, majors, governors, and senators with an agreed agenda to deal with the solutions for the actual problems of mutual concern.
- Finally inviting the community to have a joint program, for solving the border issues

Laura Yoshii

- This program to be proposed to the community works towards our future, setting priorities, taking action on environmental control, and working in the border region. Working jointly with the community.
- Border 2012 will work on specific issues affecting our region, with transparency, inviting our public to participate sharing their question and comments.

-----Introduction of the guests from several entities of environmental agency.

Winston Hickox:

- Accomplishments on the last 4 years:
  - Improvement of binational relations
  - Breaking political boundaries
  - 6 agreements, in federal and state level on issues like: Smog checkpoint on the border, Training of operators of treatment plants to mention a few.
  - Development of the proposal “Border 2012 program”.

- Several proposals across our borders, addressing specific environmental issues like our regional water issues, and other that affect beyond our border limits.

2. Draft Border Plan Presentation

   a. Audio Visual of the Border 2012/Frontera 2012 Program

   b. (Audio-visual) "Border 2012 program"

the border region covers 2000 miles from the pacific ocean to the gulf of Mexico,12 million people live here, sharing a rich history , culture, and economy.
Somes of the important issues that we deal with such as the lack of potable water, air pollution and improper waste management, cause a high incidence of water and air born diseases.
To address these environmental issues, federal, state, local and US tribes formed this binational organization.
Border 2012 will solve and protect public health and the environment based on the principles of sustainable development.
Latest binational plan implemented by the "La Paz agreement", border 21 developed in 1996, after the North American free trade agreement was signed, anticipating the environmental effects in the region, the US and Mexico launched this program to promote intergovernmental cooperation, ensuring transparency, public participation and effectiveness in border regions, media related, and functional work groups.
Also developed at the time, two international organizations to deal with the issues BECC, and NADBANK, to identify and develop environmental projects. Nine work groups were structured in the last 5 years, supporting binational environmental activities, drinking water, sewage collection , waste water treatment, in addition with the support of BECC and NADBANK, 31 water and waste related infrastructure projects where completed serving 1.6 million us and Mexico residents.
Seven sister cities agreements where signed to deal with the environmental issues in their regions.
Border 2012 proposes several changes form the previous programs, including a bottom up approach, regionally and locally decision making .
Key changes like a new mission statement, pollution prevention and environment responsibility of all coordinating bodies.
A 10 year planning period, a new organizational structure that facilitates regional and local level planning and priority setting.
It adopts 10 guiding principles, that ensures that activities become consistent and help support the mission of the program. The program will reduce health risks, use a bottom up approach for setting priorities, address disproportionate environmental impact, improve state holder participation, provide an open dialogue with access to information, strengthen the capacity of state holders, to manage environmental issues in the community, Include tribes and indigenous communities in the program, achieve measurable results, measure progress trough the use of environmental indicators.

Border 2012 proposes 5 environmental goals, for the US-Mexico border region. Reduce water contamination, reduce air pollution, reduce land pollution, reduce exposure to pesticide, particularly children's exposure. Reduce the exposure to chemicals, measurable plans have been proposed.

To reduce water contamination this plans proposes: 1) Increase the amount of people connected to water and wastewater management systems. 2) Water quality standards for the border regions. 3) Reduce by 10% the number of days of public health advisories in border coastal waters. 4) Assess 10% of the existing water systems to make them more efficient.

To reduce air pollution: 1) Reduce air remissions as much as possible, and reduce human exposure to air pollution. 2) Identify ways to reduce air pollution in border region 3) identify specific emission reduction strategies to be achieved by 2012.

To reduce land contamination; increase by 50% the number of industries, that are complying voluntarily with environmental regulations, Identify strategies to improve the management capacity, regulatory compliance, and pollution prevention, hazardous and solid waste, along the border. Clean up three of the largest abandoned tire sites in the region. Develop a binational clean up, reuse and revitalization, for abandoned waste sites on the border.

Reduce exposure to pesticides by training 36 000 farm workers, for safe handling and risks of usage of pesticides.
Reduce exposure to chemicals, as a result of chemical releases, and or deliberate acts of terrorism, develop notification mechanisms between Mexico and US, joint contingency plans, for all 14 sister cities, including preparedness and prevention methods.

The creation of 4 multimedia regional work groups supporting the efforts of local taskforces, and coordinating activities, at a regional and local level, these shared by one state and federal representative of each country.

Border wide shared by federal and Mexico co chairs, these groups will address issues of environmental health, emergency preparedness response, and cooperative performance and compliance. Policy forms with a media specific focus, to deal with broad policy issues that require an ongoing dialogue between US and Mexico.
3 policy for air, water, and hazardous waste solid waste toxic substances will be established to provide technical assistance to regional and border wide regional work groups. National coordinators will monitor and manage the implementation of border 2012.
Every two years the coordinating bodies will prepare an
implementation report that describes the status of current and proposed
activities under the Border 2012 program. This progress report that will asses mid-term and final accomplishments that describe progress on meetings. Public participation will be implemented.
The goals and objectives of the program, including environmental

indicators, will be published in 2006 and 2012 respectively.

c. Presentation by Ricardo Diaz: Regional Issues

3. Question & Answer Discussion

Q:
- In the point made in the border 2012 video, concerning the goal of reducing 10% the pollution levels in coastal waters. My question is; is this an abstract number or are there any basis on the percentage seen in the presentation?

A:
---This point was made trying to establish a goal by setting a good baseline to measure the progress of the program.

Q:
- Why don't we see the funding of the related proposal?
- Why are they not included in the presentation made or in the document published?

A:
We have annual based budget so, we can't specify. We are hoping to continue at the 75 million dollar level, toward 2002. But in order to maintain this fund we need community support.
We are protecting our present funding; we need a clear set of indicators of the specific border issues, which will tell us the state of the environment.
Build more creative ways to leverage this fund

- What did S. Bob Filner mean with requiring "Political support from here", what does this mean? What do we have to do on both sides of the border to turn this political support into financial support?

It means that we are to take this to a state or a federal level to get support from larger advocacy, state wide or national wide organizations, this will give us basis to develop our argument into a bigger level and get all 10 states, to deal with the federal issue.

- Back to the Funding question? 70-80% of the programs take place in Mexico, because of the bigger needs; we need to reestablish this programs to work equally on both sides of the border.
- What kinds of funding can Mexico provide to support this project?

This is a matter on setting the frame on working in this project in a long-term agreement on both sides of the border.

- We need to work more towards actions, more than prolonging the documentation of this program… "Not only wishful thinking"

We need to have a clear vision on what we are working towards, so that we know that our efforts will actually see the result on our concrete goals that we are committing to on both sides of the border.

In the past there was specific environmental education in the program: Where does more environmental education fall into the program border 2012?

---We are developing educational programs.

Issues not incorporated in Border 2012; Water availability & water biodiversity in wildlife regions?

---We are supporting entities that deal with these specific regions

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Are there any specific proposals that help some loops like the power plants build on both sides of the border for example regulations on disposal like it was mention previously?

--- We are working on it

What is going to happen when our natural resources of water like the Colorado river run dry?

--- It falls out of our region, but we agree that it's a very important issue that will be taken into consideration.

The "La Paz Agreement" establishes that hazardous waste is sent to the back to the USA for proper management, what is the outcome of this agreement?

---Mexico requires this not the La Paz agreement…. But we haven't had an answer from the Mexico Government to see if this regulation is going to continue this day.

Conservation…. If we don't have a supply of natural resources where are we going to get it?

---We would have to restructure the question to actually talk about a specific issue…

Are you open to adding new proposals to the Border 2012 program?

--- Yes, it's not specific in the document.

Who, How and for what is someone accountable for this program?

---Organizationally, insuring that all the goals are met
---Public accountability: Being transparent to the public, to hear everyone's opinion.

Which will be the indicators for institutional deficiencies?

Reduce the level of pesticide exposure, training the farm workers.

I don't see in writing how this program reduces the actual excessive use of pesticide?
I think this is a more important issue that should be addressed.

There should be better work between EPA & "Ecología", that with other entities.
How does border 2012, protect historical land?

4. Public comment period

Bill Power: "Border Power Working group"

- The need of a Policy form dedicated to power plants & energy facilities specifically.
- The availability of running water for the regions where a lot of this energy plants are located.
- Elimination of wastewater consumption on all power plants in Mexico
    - The use of dry cooling system as a treatment for waste water treatment, and developing on both sides of the border.

Mario Saltzman " Fundacion de la Puerta"

- The issue of the Mistranslation of the documentation
- The issue of conservation is extremely important
- I like the Idea of the new approach, but there is a lack operational & decision-making.
- The lack of involvement of the public sector.
- Specify the local capacity development.
- Not dealing with resources
- No reference to aquifers
- Identifying the waste tire sites
- The disposal of waste vehicles
- The need for Institutional goals dealing with their efficiencies
- The Informs, of the midterm and final evaluations
- What is going to happen after November 22nd? When the commenting period ends?
- The high cost of usage of dry cooling system that is required for the development of other more useful purposes should be taken into consideration.
- Solving of the air pollution problem within 20 years, but the lack of support is persistent.

SDNHM

- In the Work towards environmental education in border regions, we would like to see this in writing as part of a specific goal in this border 2012 program.

Lisa Brown, EPA

- Enforcement sub- group work, program has great challenges, this program has work together on both sides of the border for 10 years, exchanging information, and resources.
Determination of the source of pollution
- Development of a 1- 800 number
- Address the issue of the abandonment of the plan to treat hazardous waste in the USA
- The plan doesn't include our program, if we don't include this we might face a lack of support.

Karen Dodi, DA

- The Funding of 2.3 million from CALEPA mentioned before, where is this money used?

- The funding for the border have been decreased over time, but the support for smaller entities is greater.

- Workgroups, & subgroups created in the past, are still being omitted from this actual programs, as support of the plan considering ourselves as players of this joint program, Being Bottoms- Up, is not state government, but all governmental divisions involved in our issues.

Nancy Wu; USEPA region 9
Of the 73 million available for USEPA: how much of this money is focused on this particular region?

Funding topic: action oriented, tired of meeting, we need some results, Discouragement from lack of funding that are used on other issues, If EPA, and SEMARNAT, have to restructure the issues that haven't been solved.

How much money does EPA have for these programs? Including states, the need of support for federal government due to the enormous amount of taxes this region pay.

The usage of private funding has a lot of disadvantages, so it should be used on very special projects, instead we should encourage our federal governmental to support us.

The Sierra Club
Specific on targets, and issues like the privatization of basic resources, all around the world, with a disastrous outcome, we need to establish the access of water as a human right.
Volunteering, no private companies are going to support us voluntarily

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Mario Saltzman " Fundacion la Puerta"

- Under the fact that there will never be enough money to solve this issues, Who decides our priorities?
    - All funding finally comes out of the citizens pocket.
    - Federal government in Mexico should establish the economic development to internalize.

- Chris Atkin; Tijuana
Mexico is grossly under taxed which is a very important fact, because the money is not available for the keeping on the land, as is the lack of infrastructure.
Focusing the San Diego funding on treating 100% of wastewater in Tijuana is not cost effective.

Connie Garcia
EHC
- NAFTA is one of our biggest issues, that haven't been issued, like the "Metales y Derivados" case, which is still a present danger in those communities.
- Free trade don't address the environmental danger

Pro- peninsula
- Local Organization state holder to join this program, is not mentioned in the plan, the facts are omitted on the plan, so it makes it less real.

5. Closing