

# Border 2012: U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program

## Goal 1: Reduce Water Contamination

National Water Coordinators Meeting

San Antonio, TX, May 24, 2007





*Objective 1: By 2012, promote a 25% increase in the number of homes connected to potable water supply and wastewater collection and treatment systems.*

Status:

- Water Connections to date: 23,650 (96% of Goal)
- Wastewater Connections to date: 100,950 (58% of Goal)

Suggestions for refinements:

- Revise drinking water target
- Better define universe of drinking and wastewater infrastructure needs

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Objective 2: *Assess significant shared and transboundary surface waters. By 2012, achieve a majority of currently exceeded water quality standards in those waters.*

Status:

- Web portal for binational water quality database completed
- Continuing assessment of surface water in Mexico and U.S. to determine water quality exceedances

Suggestions for refinements:

- Groundwater was recurring theme
  - monitoring of quality and quantity (*jurisdictional issues of U.S. government raised*)
  - develop a pilot project in aquifer in New Mexico/Chihuahua
  - define binational aquifers (using satellite technology such as “GRACE”)
- Recognize and address contribution of non-point sources

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## Link between infrastructure (Obj.1) and water quality (Obj. 2)

### New Wastewater Treatment Plant in Mexicali

- Investment: 340 million pesos (US\$30M) by Mexico and U.S.
- 337,900 residents connected to wastewater treatment plant.
- 14 million gallons per day of untreated sewage have been eliminated from New River and Salton Sea
- Water will be reclaimed for green areas in Mexicali and possibly restoration of Rio Hardy
- Bacteria concentrations in New River have dropped drastically, protecting human health in Mexicali and Calexico.
- Phosphorous loadings into Salton Sea expected to decrease by 10%, benefiting water quality.



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*Objective 3: By 2006, implement a monitoring system for evaluating coastal water quality at the international border beaches. Establish methods for meeting coastal water quality standards of both countries by 2012.*

### Status:

- Both U.S. and Mexico have established monitoring systems
- Both countries have nearly identical beach water quality standards for bacteria.
- “Playas Limpias” program established by CONAGUA
- Border 2012 proposal being considered to establish additional monitoring necessary for “Playas Limpias” certification

### Suggestions for refinements:

- Public outreach and education programs
- Wastewater infrastructure improvements

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*Objective 4: By 2005, promote the assessment of water system conditions in 10 percent of the existing water systems in the border cities to identify opportunities for improvement in overall water system efficiencies.*

Status:

- Objective achieved!

Suggestions for refinements:

- Improvement of utility management in Mexico
- Training and retention of competent staff
- Proper operations and maintenance

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# Indicators

## Status:

- Water and wastewater connections are current indicators of program performance

## Comments:

- Difficulty in linking disease rates with surface water quality
- Resource constraints require collaboration and leveraging
- Human health-based water quality parameters (bacteria, cryptosporidium, etc.) as indicators to measure progress resulting from infrastructure projects?
- Other water quality parameters (TDS, sediments, BOD<sub>5</sub>) to track environmental progress?

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