Joint Communiqué
U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Program
The 2006 National Coordinators Meeting

We, the National Coordinators of the Border 2012: U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program, convened our third meeting on April 25-27, 2006, in the city of Ensenada, Baja California where we reinforced our binational partnership, renewed our commitment to the Border 2012 goals and objectives, and celebrated many tangible successes. The meeting resulted in a shared understanding of environmental accomplishments to date, and the priority actions needed in upcoming years to address environmental health concerns.

We acknowledge that the Tribal nations and indigenous communities along the U.S. and Mexico border face critical challenges in addressing the issues of clean air, clean water, and the proper disposal of solid and hazardous wastes. These efforts have translated into several projects to address critical environmental issues, such as the binational effort to provide safe drinking water to the Tohono O'odham Nation's community of Quitovac in Sonora, and indigenous communities in Baja California; the cleanup of waste at the Tohono O'odham Nation; the removal of 34,000 tires by the Pala Band of Mission Indians; the improvement of water and wastewater infrastructure for the Rincon, Los Coyotes, and Pechanga tribes; and the monitoring of air quality by the Cocopah and Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribes.

We recognize that water infrastructure needs continue to exceed available funding even though the significant progress in delivering water infrastructure through the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADB) has benefited over 6.7 million people on the border. A system was instituted to prioritize 135 projects with an estimated total construction cost of $894 million, of which 26 new projects were selected for funding to benefit more than 474 thousand people. Preparations for a second prioritization cycle are underway.

We commend the U.S.-Mexico Shared Water project, the first prototype version of a Border Water Repository, which collected 200,000 water quality data points from monitoring stations along the border and for many water indicators. This is a large step towards assessing water quality in shared and transboundary waters. The second phase to this project is currently in planning and will allow direct access to the water quality data via a web based portal.

We celebrate the fulfillment of the first interim air quality objective with the 2005 publication of the borderwide emissions inventory baseline report and the identification through the prioritization process of four alternative scenarios for reducing emissions. We commend the subsequent effort to refine those scenarios into priority needs and opportunities for addressing air pollution in the region.

We support the targeted efforts to reduce particulate matter (PM) emissions and the *Letter of Intent* signed in October 2005, which commits EPA and SEMARNAT to reduce diesel truck emissions. We recognize the significant advances in bringing cleaner fuels to the border region and efforts to demonstrate the use of advanced technologies to control pollution and improve fuel efficiency. Local initiatives, such as enhanced vehicle inspection programs in Ciudad Juárez and measures to reduce traffic congestion at border crossings, are commended. Excellent progress is being made to reduce emissions and improve fuel efficiency through retrofitting school buses in Laredo and Nogales and vehicle fleets in Tijuana and Las Cruces. The construction of a truck stop electrification station in El Paso will significantly reduce engine idling. Binational participation in the West Coast Clean Diesel and Blue Skyways Collaboratives encourages air pollution reductions from diesel engine retrofits, fuel enhancements, and efficiency improvements. We also support efforts to reduce PM emissions through road paving projects and the construction of lower emission brick kilns.

We recognize the impressive trends towards improved air quality in the El Paso/Ciudad Juárez and Yuma/San Luis Rio Colorado air basins. Texas will propose to redesignate El Paso, which recently met the ozone standard, as also meeting the carbon monoxide standard. Arizona will propose to redesignate Yuma as attainment for the PM_{10} standard later this year. As part of our commitment to improve information exchange and address the need for real-time air monitoring data, we support the binational efforts in California and Baja California for transferring the management of monitoring stations to Mexican state authorities. We recognize the need to improve and enhance the real-time air quality websites for Imperial County and northern Baja California as a tool to inform the border residents of air quality in their communities.

We commend the clean up of over 2.1 million tires at several scrap tire piles in the border area. Considered among the largest tire piles in the western border region, the cleanup of Mexicali tires piles INNOR is complete and Centinela is near completion. A significant number of tires have been removed from the Ciudad Juarez tire pile.

We acknowledge the implementation of a successful Phase 1 stabilization action that resulted in the removal of nearly 2000 tons of hazardous waste. The Metales y Derivados remediation is now proceeding to the site characterization, field sampling, and design phases. These actions are consistent with the Border 2012 draft Binational Policy on Clean-Up and Restoration. Members of the impacted community have been given access to the decision-making process and have been integrated into the Metales y Derivados Technical Workgroup.

We commend the collaboration of the environmental health partners, including the regional environmental health taskforces, the BECC, the US-Mexico Border Health Association and the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission, among others. Through these collaborations we have defined priorities, such as environmental monitoring, health data collection, environmental education, technical training, risk communication, and policy development.

We are committed to advancing binational planning and emergency preparedness to reduce the threat of major environmental releases. Working with U.S. Customs will enable emergency responders to cross the border more easily. The Joint Contingency Plan was updated and the binational notification system has been revised and successfully field tested. Our commitment is to work towards obtaining insurance for local responders, to establish the Baja California Emergency Management Institution, and to continue conducting binational exercises.

We recognize programs such as Mexico's Clean Industry, Arizona's AMIGO, California's Green Business, New Mexico's Green Zia, and Clean Texas, which have resulted in greater compliance with environmental laws and participation in environmental stewardship programs. We support the stronger linkages forged with U. S. Customs and Border Patrol and Mexican Aduanas to improve compliance with trans-boundary hazardous waste shipment requirements.

We support and recognize the development of environmental and performance indicators to monitor the progress of our binational efforts. A fundamental accomplishment is the publication of the Strategy for Indicator Development, which describes a conceptual framework, indicator selection criteria, and terminology.

As we move forward, our immediate priorities are:

- Increasing access to and improving safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Retrofitting diesel buses and trucks and improving availability of low sulfur diesel fuel on the border.
- Re-energize efforts to develop a binational waste tire management strategy to address tire piles.
- Strengthen institutional capacity for contaminated site cleanups by applying the binational cleanup and restoration policy along the border.
- Remove and dispose of obsolete pesticides stored along the border.
- Conduct binational emergency preparedness drills or exercises at sister cities.
- Strengthen inspection capacity at ports of entry and industrial facilities.
- Pursue additional opportunities to capture methane gases from landfills through the Methane to Markets Initiative.
- Pilot the use of radio frequency identification technologies to track transboundary movement of hazardous waste.

We believe that in the last three years the program has met our collective expectations. Federal, state, and local authorities are committed to build on these accomplishments through new collaborations and synergies. We recognize that the results reported are only part of the actions undertaken by the Border 2012 partners. SEMARNAT and EPA ratify its commitment to support this productive collaboration.

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