



Good Neighbor Environmental Board Virtual Public Meeting
Microsoft Teams Virtual Platform
May 29, 2024; 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. EDT

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Member Roll Call

Eugene Green, Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) Designated Federal Officer, Federal Advisory Committee Management and Oversight Division (FACMOD), Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIE), Office of Mission Support (OMS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Robbie Young-Mackall, Director, FACMOD, OIE, OMS, EPA; Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB; and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Mr. Eugene Green welcomed the participants, and his office staff conducted the roll call. A list of meeting participants is included as Appendix A. The meeting agenda is included as Appendix B. The official certification of the minutes by the Chair is included as Appendix C.

Ms. Robbie Young-Mackall explained that she had last addressed the Board during its new member orientation and administrative meeting in March. The members heard presentations on Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) general ethics and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). CEQ's key priorities helped establish the tone and purpose of this meeting, and the CEQ liaison will present CEQ's formal response to GNEB's 20th report, *Water and Wastewater in the U.S.–Mexico Border Region*, which was transmitted to the President and Congress in December 2023. Ms. Young-Mackall thanked Mr. Green and FACMOD staff for their role in supporting FACA committees and organizing this meeting. She thanked Mr. Nolan Pinkney of FACMOD for his support of GNEB as he transitions from this role and introduced Ms. Larissa Williams of FACMOD, who will help support the Board moving forward. She also acknowledged the Board members' commitment to public service, their enthusiasm and their contributions to GNEB.

Dr. Kimberly Collins expressed her appreciation for the Board members' time, efforts and ideas. She is excited about the next 18 months, during which GNEB will work to create documents that communicate the real and dire needs that exist along the U.S.–Mexico border.

Dr. Irasema Coronado thanked the Board members for their dedication to GNEB. She is looking forward to collaborating with partners throughout the region to improve the quality of life for residents on both sides of the border. She thanked FACMOD staff for their support.

Overview of Agenda and Meeting Goals/Objectives

Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Dr. Collins provided an overview of the agenda and meeting goals, which include determining how the members will work together and use each member's skill set to the best ability possible. GNEB members will consider the work plan that has been developed and provide input on how they can best contribute. By the end of this meeting, the work plan and logistics for completing the first two advice letters should be refined.

Dr. Collins hopes that community members will attend and provide their input at the next hybrid meeting of the Board in September in El Paso, Texas. The work plan includes an outreach workgroup focused on

communications, and Dr. Collins hopes that those Board members who work with residents and stakeholders within the region on a daily basis will help with the communication process. This will allow GNEB to effectively communicate its work to the community and government decision-makers who can help address the needs of the border region.

Dr. Maria-Elena Giner offered the support of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) in the planning of the September meeting. Dr. Collins accepted the offer and noted that activities will be planned with the local border office, stakeholders and IBWC. Dr. Coronado added that the meeting is being planned for September 4 and 5. Mr. Green noted that Dr. Carlos Rincón of EPA Region 6 also will be helping plan local activities.

CEQ's Response to GNEB's 20th Report

Kimberly Tenggardjaja, Director for Nature Conservation, CEQ, and Liaison to GNEB

Dr. Kimberly Tenggardjaja thanked GNEB for its most recent report; CEQ will submit an official response letter. CEQ appreciates the report's detailed analysis of unmet drinking water and wastewater treatment needs—as well as the intertwined issues of stormwater, watershed and wetlands management—for the millions of people who live in the southern border region.

The Biden Administration is working to protect U.S. freshwater resources and ensure that every community has access to clean water and recently announced the America the Beautiful Freshwater Challenge, which sets a bold goal to protect, restore and reconnect 8 million acres of wetlands and 100,000 miles of rivers and streams by 2030. This new initiative calls on states and other governments and entities to advance their policies and strategies for conserving and restoring U.S. freshwater systems. The Administration is committed to updating drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, building resilience to drought, and conserving and restoring U.S. waters. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides \$50 billion to upgrade water infrastructure in the United States.

Inadequate wastewater and sanitation systems jeopardize the health of communities, so BIL invests nearly \$13 billion in wastewater funding to expand and upgrade these critical systems, with a particular focus on underserved and disadvantaged communities. To address the ongoing megadrought across the western United States and Colorado River Basin, a recent agreement will conserve at least 3 million acre-feet of water in the Colorado River Basin through the end of 2026. The National Climate Resilience Framework was released in 2023, with \$1.8 billion committed to the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program, which supports states, tribes, territories and communities in reducing their risks from disasters and natural hazards. For example, the Bayside community within Imperial Beach, California, received \$15 million to reduce risks from flooding. Nearly \$830 million in grants is available to make transfer station infrastructure more resilient to climate change. As part of this initiative, Doña Ana County, New Mexico, will receive \$2 billion in BIL funding to develop a comprehensive resilience plan that will focus on transportation infrastructure vulnerabilities during emergency evacuations and climate-related disasters.

An array of resources and training exists to support the Justice40 Initiative, which will assess the federal government's progress in advancing environmental justice. The Environmental Justice Scorecard presents a baseline assessment of environmental justice actions taken by federal agencies and shows how these actions are making meaningful change in communities. CEQ also released a template in October 2023 to help federal agencies develop their environmental justice strategic plans. Finally, [Conservation.gov](https://www.conserva.gov) was recently launched to help connect people with information, tools, resources and opportunities to support land and water conservation projects in communities across the country. The website includes a financial assistance tool that matches users with available federal financial assistance based on their eligibility and interest and directs them where to apply.

Dr. Collins and Mr. Green thanked Dr. Tenggardjaja for her presentation and agreed that the Board’s work plan could be provided to her after the GNEB members refine it during this meeting. The alignment between CEQ’s and GNEB’s priorities, as well CEQ’s thoughts and ideas on the work plan, will help create the best possible outcomes for the border region.

In response to a question from Dr. Rincón, Dr. Tenggardjaja explained that Doña Ana County received \$2 million in funding as part of a recent transportation infrastructure grant initiative. These grants have been awarded or are in the process of being awarded, but implementation work is not likely to be underway at this time.

GNEB Workgroup Report Out on Proposed Charge Topics

Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB; Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB; and GNEB Workgroup Members

Dr. Collins explained that the potential implications of the upcoming U.S. and Mexican elections led to GNEB’s decision to create a series of four comment letters, each approximately 7–10 pages in length, based on the Board members’ topics of interest. Developing content that is easy for individuals to consume will create the momentum that GNEB desires. These letters will include case studies—related to environmental conditions and border projects—that can be applicable across the border region. The Board will develop parallel outlines for the letters so that each follows the same pattern of information; the end goal is to reorganize and combine the letters into a report that can be translated into Spanish and communicated as a whole.

The topic of the first letter is environmental justice and aging infrastructure along the border, and the accompanying case study will focus on a project being considered in the sister-city pair of Presidio, Texas–Ojinaga, Chihuahua.

Ms. Pamela Giblin explained that the American College of Environmental Lawyers, to which several GNEB members belong, selects global *pro bono* projects to support and recently decided to help provide potable water to Texas border communities. Presidio was selected as a result of the confluence of technology, legal and policy issues. Desiccation units that draw moisture from the air—the largest aquifer on Earth—have been selected as the technology. Ms. Giblin reported that Mr. Jonathan Niermann had sent her an article suggesting that Laredo, Texas, or the Lower Rio Grande Valley might be better candidates for this project. No matter the location of the test site, the American College of Environmental Lawyers is committed to providing free legal work to ensure that border communities have potable water. Legal issues will arise because of the need to identify supporters in and coordinate with Mexico. If the test is successful, the technology could be implemented along the border. This provides an opportunity for GNEB to help poor communities that are trucking in water at great expense.

Mr. Niermann added that he had proposed that these comment letters be structured differently than the Board’s usual policy advice letters and instead describe an on-the-ground effort by GNEB to physically help communities, with a policy conversation following. The West Texas Bolson Aquifer, which supplies Presidio, is in good shape with no current water-availability crisis, so a different community may benefit more from this project. Ms. Giblin encouraged the Board to provide input on this cutting-edge project and its location. Dr. Collins clarified that GNEB’s scope is the U.S. side of the border, so the project must focus on U.S. communities while recognizing that deep connections with Mexico exist because sister cities share water resources and connected environments. Because the environment does not align itself with political borders, it is important for the Board to consider how to include the Mexican side within its scope.

Dr. Coronado agreed that binational problems need binational solutions. When border environmental institutions were being developed under the North American Free Trade Agreement, the intent was for

them to be binational organizations; when a border activist learned that the institutions would focus on the U.S. side, he resigned because it is useless to perform unilateral work. Perhaps GNEB could work to change its scope based on the importance of working binationally. Ms. Melissa Gonzalez-Roses noted that the Border 2025 Program works binationally and could provide input from Mexican counterparts. Dr. Rincón noted that GNEB can perform the work as part of the La Paz Agreement; Dr. Collins commented that the topic of the third letter is to consider the La Paz Agreement's past and present effects.

Dr. Giner remarked that the U.S. government, including EPA and the Bureau of Reclamation, has invested in Mexico on the premise that this investment will benefit the U.S. side of the border, so including Mexico could be framed as a U.S.-side benefit to allow GNEB to stay within its scope. To ensure that the recommendation is binational, input from Mexico will be required, and the IBWC U.S. Section could engage with the IBWC Mexican Section. Her doctoral dissertation focused on providing water and sanitation to Texas communities, and operations and maintenance (O&M) costs are difficult for communities to sustain. If the federal government funds the implementation of low-tech solutions, perhaps GNEB could examine O&M and sustainability issues. She also cautioned that the Board must consider sanitation so that supplying first-time water to communities does not cause unintended consequences (e.g., disease).

Mr. Carlos Suarez wondered whether GNEB has coordinated with the U.S. embassy in Mexico City, Mexico, or the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). When he served as acting deputy director for USAID, that agency coordinated with its Mexican counterparts on water issues and challenges along the border. Although GNEB must focus on the U.S. side, coordination with the Mexican side on binational issues is necessary. He wondered whether GNEB should engage the embassy, U.S. agencies that work on the Mexican side, and the Board's Mexican counterparts. He thought that GNEB should consider effects on Mexico while developing these letters. Dr. Collins noted that Board members represent agencies that work in Mexico, but neither she nor Dr. Coronado is aware of any formal coordination with the embassy.

Dr. Collins asked Mr. Saurez to take the lead on working with the embassy, U.S. Department of State and USAID. Ms. Giblin added that the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico has Hispanic roots from the southwestern United States, which presents an opportunity for GNEB to engage on this project, and she highly recommends involving the embassy. She suggested that GNEB select the test community, describe the initial technology and how it would work in the community, and then lay out a plan for maintaining the infrastructure. Mr. Mario Lopez added that he supports informing the embassy and border consulates about GNEB's work, and Dr. Collins asked him to work with Mr. Saurez on this effort.

Ms. Kathryn Becker stressed that it is important that the Board, as a FACA committee, consider its audience, capacity and knowledge base. The U.S. President and Congress are GNEB's listening body, with responsiveness from CEQ, so the Board does not need to replicate or duplicate any of the current binational or multinational foci. The New Mexico Environment Department participates in the Border 2025 Program, which is a binational agreement between EPA and the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, or SEMARNAT) that serves a specific purpose. She does not want to see GNEB look too broadly. Her work with the state of Chihuahua and binational border programs has taught her that when she believes she is working "apples to apples," one apple is actually an orange, whether it is a legal framework, technological framework or how relationships are conveyed. She recommended that GNEB use its specific expertise to work on the task at hand and frame it to apply to border cities. The sister cities will benefit from the Board's work, and these pairs will allow GNEB, given its scope, to more appropriately connect any of the work performed in border cities.

Ms. Becker had suggested reordering the letters if the ultimate report will focus on border city needs, capacity and cooperation in preparation for severe weather events and infrastructure improvement through the lenses of tribal populations, disadvantaged communities and industry. Beginning the report with the La Paz Agreement, and including background on why that treaty matters, may be more helpful for providing a framework. Next, the Board can examine capacity, followed by community resilience and then environmental justice. The treaty framework and inventory assessment lead into how environmental justice can ensure that communities are served by identifying needs and working within available funding. Ms. Becker thought that the four topics should be packaged differently, beginning with the history, then logistics (e.g., science and data), and ending with the cooperative angle within policy or legality. This order could help advance conversations and link the topics to border cities and severe weather and heat events.

Dr. Collins explained that she had included Dr. Becker's comments in the outline for the final report, noting that the letters would be reordered within the report. The first report section will be on the La Paz Agreement, the second on border city capacity, the third on community resiliency, and the fourth on environmental justice. The reason for developing the letters in the current order is because GNEB can have the most immediate impact with a comment letter on the Presidio–Ojinaga case study or Laredo/Lower Rio Grande Valley case studies. The work already completed on these projects allows GNEB to release the first letter fairly soon to keep the schedule moving forward. The second letter will focus on community resiliency projects and the case study in El Paso. The third letter will focus on the La Paz Agreement, recommendations for future collaborations and a case study in the Arizona border region. Then, after the elections in the United States and Mexico, GNEB can better examine how cooperation can occur. The fourth letter will move into the California region, describing two very different communities that share a border with Baja California—San Diego and Imperial Counties. This case study will focus on community capacity and how to facilitate border cooperation and build local capacity to respond to border issues. The topic will focus on issues around tribal and disadvantaged communities. All of these letters will be ordered cohesively. In response to a suggestion by a member, Dr. Collins noted that she will specifically call out tribal nations in topic #4 to read, “the capacity of border cities and tribal nations to manage environmental challenges.”

Dr. Brown explained that topic #2, community resiliency, is the only topic that provides GNEB the opportunity to connect to climate change. Current temperature forecasts in the border region are over 100°F; in 2023, the El Paso region experienced more than 65 days with temperatures over 100°F. Dr. Brown suggested that the Board modify the topic to include confronting severe weather events in the border region. He offered to take the lead on topic #2 based on his experiences living in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He hoped that topic #3's focus on the Arizona border region would still allow GNEB to examine the La Paz Agreement across the entire border region because the agreement is the foundational mechanism under which much of the binational environmental work is performed. Dr. Collins explained that the Arizona case study serves as an example of collaboration around the environment, and the letter will discuss the La Paz Agreement as it applies across the entire border region.

Dr. Teresa Pohlman asked for clarification from Mr. Green about GNEB's ability to address issues on the Mexican side of the border. Mr. Green explained that typically the issues addressed in the Board's reports and letters have been on the U.S. side, but GNEB can work with other organizations, such as those that Mr. Rincón and Region 9 work with, on issues that could have a broader outreach from the binational perspective. Mr. Green would like to schedule a meeting with Drs. Collins, Coronado and Tenggardjaja to identify how to approach these topics to address the binational perspective. GNEB reports to the President and Congress, and CEQ is based out of the White House, so national recommendations about how CEQ could engage with agencies that address issues on the Mexican side of the border would be appropriate. Dr. Pohlman noted that the U.S. Department of State must be engaged as well. Mr. Green explained that EPA is working on securing a representative from the U.S. Department of State to serve on GNEB.

Dr. Coronado described the destruction and lives lost during annual flooding in Nogales, Arizona–Nogales, Sonora. This is an important binational example within the topic of community resiliency to confront severe weather. IBWC works binationally on these issues, and other organizations could be identified as well.

Dr. Jeffrey Payne offered to serve on the team developing the letter for topic #2. He can bring climate and science data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the assets of the National Weather Service. He agreed with Dr. Brown that topic #2 is at the center of addressing the overall topic of the report, and topic #1 can include discussions of infrastructure and how the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and BIL can help infrastructure projects move forward. These projects must consider future conditions, climate science and technology and ensure that good infrastructure decisions are being made and result in viable solutions. This concern intersects with environmental justice, ensuring that disadvantaged communities have the capacity and technical assistance that they need. Dr. Collins agreed and thought that climate change crosscuts all of the topics. For example, how does the La Paz Agreement meet today’s environmental needs along the border? How is that agreement meeting the severe weather and climate threats currently occurring along the border?

Dr. Pohlman volunteered to work on topics #1 and #4. She also wondered whether NOAA has data on the Mexican side. Dr. Payne responded that NOAA has limited data on the Mexican side, including Doppler radar; beyond that, satellites cover the major hemispheric domains.

Mr. Richard Kirschner volunteered to work on topic #2. He has used remote sensing satellite data to quantify urban heat islands and climate resilience in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mr. Brett Range volunteered for topic #2. Mr. Rob Roy volunteered to serve on the workgroup for topic #4. He also will gather information about the capacity of tribal nations in the U.S.–Mexico border region to manage environmental infrastructure challenges.

Dr. Brown thought that any work that explores airsheds and watersheds would allow GNEB to move toward a binational perspective and stay within its scope per the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative.

Dr. Yamilett Carrillo Guerrero commented that topic #2 encompasses many cities within the border region, as well as the Tijuana River watershed. During extreme weather events, debris floats from south to north. Mexico has very little capacity in terms of forecasting data. Mexico’s equivalent of the Federal Emergency Management Agency has shared with the San Diego Foundation that extreme weather events in Mexico cause damage and loss of life similar to that characterized by poor and underserved communities in the United States. Underserved communities generally are hit the hardest and have very limited resources to respond immediately to emergency needs. Community foundations and other nonprofit organizations are able to bridge the immediate, urgent needs of communities on the U.S. side, but these types of organizations generally are not as strong or as well-funded in Mexico. Aging infrastructure in Mexico causes stress on U.S. communities and infrastructure. Dr. Carrillo Guerrero asked the Board to consider whether topic #2 could encompass or include examples from locations all along the border or whether it is better to focus each topic on one of the four border states. She volunteered to work on topic #4.

Dr. Collins explained that the outline for each letter includes (1) an introduction, (2) a “Solutions and Challenges” section, (3) “The Border Context” section, and (4) policy recommendations. The outlines can be modified, and suggestions are welcome. She asked the Board members to consider how the different letters could be organized to examine the case example and broaden that example into the border context and include additional communities.

Dr. Pohlman thought that it might be helpful to include a list of funding available through BIL and IRA as a reference or appendix in the final report. It could help communities identify available funding and how to apply. Dr. Brown agreed.

Dr. Pohlman noted that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has been working with water condensation models and devices and could possibly provide a demonstration during the next GNEB meeting. Ms. Giblin explained that the American College of Environmental Lawyers is working with the inventors of the desiccation units, but any information that Dr. Pohlman could provide about CBP would help ensure that the latest and best technology is presented during the Board's September meeting. The key challenge is scale. Mini units provide water to a small number of individuals at a U.S. Border Patrol station, for example, but developing a unit that can provide sufficient amount of water for a large community is a challenge. She encouraged others who have information about this technology to share it.

Dr. Collins reminded the members that each letter will be no more than 10 pages, so the information must be succinct, direct and compelling. Information about funding opportunities from federal agencies, states and nonprofit organizations could be shared within the "Challenges and Solutions" section.

Dr. Stephen Mumme suggested changing the outline for the La Paz Agreement letter to include trends during the past 40 years. Dr. Collins suggested that GNEB look at the outline for each letter and provide any ideas for how the letters should be formulated to best communicate the issues.

Dr. Collins explained that topic #3 focuses on the La Paz Agreement, including the past and future, what has worked well, and recommendations for future collaboration. Topic #4 focuses on the capacity of border cities. She will send the revised work plan to the Board members so that the workgroups can meet and begin working on these topics as soon as possible. The first two letters can be developed simultaneously during the summer. The letter on topic #1, environmental justice, will be presented at the Board's September meeting for approval, with distribution in the fall. The letter on topic #2, community resiliency, will be discussed during the September meeting and presented during the November meeting for distribution by the end of the calendar year. The letter on topic #3, the La Paz Agreement, will be discussed during the November meeting and presented at the March 2025 meeting for approval, with distribution in the spring of 2025. The letter on topic #4, border city capacity, will be written during the spring and summer of 2025 for distribution in late summer of 2025. The letters will be distributed to the President, Congress and CEQ, as well as to border communities. Advocacy and education efforts will accompany the letters, as well as perhaps a conversation with Mexican agencies and officials. The Board will develop the final report in the fall of 2025 by integrating all the letters, providing context, creating introductory and conclusionary material, and including an appendix with funding information.

Dr. Collins noted that different teams with different expertise will ensure that various perspectives, including those of tribal and disadvantaged communities, are included. A translation workgroup can be established; if EPA is unable to financially support translation of the final report, the workgroup can raise funds for professional translation. A community and outreach workgroup will ensure that an outreach and advocacy process is in place. A planning committee will ensure that a continuous conversation about these border issues occurs, with advocacy included in that conversation. Dr. Collins encouraged the members to volunteer for these workgroups in addition to the writing workgroups.

Mr. Lopez asked whether GNEB is allowed to fundraise. Dr. Collins explained that perhaps the Board could seek sponsorship. She asked Mr. Green to confirm whether GNEB can accept outside sponsorship to support translation services. Mr. Green explained that Board members represent workforce-sector organizations, and members can work through their respective affiliations.

Mr. Roy supports separating the tribal lens from the disadvantaged community lens, and he strongly agrees with the need to translate the report into Spanish. He suggested that Board members could utilize

Spanish language expertise within their organizations. Dr. Collins reiterated the need for a high-quality, professional translation that reflects the Spanish spoken in northern Mexico and the Mexican border region. Ms. Giblin offered to work on the translation workgroup, as she performed courtroom translation for years and is familiar with climate, technical and legal translations. She agreed that nuances in the translation are important and pointed out that federal agencies often have staff who translate bilingual materials. Dr. Collins noted that experts could be called on to review the translated material to ensure that it is of good quality.

Mr. Green noted that he is working on the translation of the 20th GNEB report with one of the offices within EPA that handles translation, which can serve as a resource for translation of the next report. If an issue arises that would prevent this, Mr. Green can confer with the Board at that point. He also will need fluent Spanish speakers to proofread the 20th GNEB report before it goes into final production. Dr. Coronado agreed to help.

Dr. Trent Biggs has experience in hydrology, flooding and heat stress, particularly in the California region, and volunteered to contribute to topics #2 and #4. Dr. Rebecca Beavers volunteered to contribute to topics #1 and #2. Mr. Niermann stated that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality would assist with topics #1–3. Dr. Larisa Ann Ford volunteered for topics #2–4. Mr. Range asked to be added to the tribal lens workgroup. Dr. Rincón, Dr. Carrillo Guerrero and Mr. Joaquin Marruffo volunteered to serve on the translation workgroup. If the EPA translation office that Mr. Green mentioned is unable to assist with the next report, Dr. Carrillo Guerrero could research her foundation's internal processes for translation.

Mr. Roy asked whether the report must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act for readability for persons with disabilities. Mr. Pinkey responded that all EPA documents, including the Board's reports, undergo compliance checks for accessibility under Section 508 [of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973].

Dr. Carrillo Guerrero asked about the length of the final report. Dr. Collins thought that it would be between 50 and 60 pages. Mr. Green added that the Board's 20th report was approximately 90 pages, and the 19th report was approximately 140 pages. GNEB has contract support for a report up to 100 pages. He added that the Board has raised the issue of whether people will take the time to read a lengthy report, which is another factor to consider.

Discuss and Approve Proposed Charge Topics

GNEB Members

Dr. Collins opened the floor for the Board members to provide additional comments and ideas about the work plan, workgroups and timeline.

Dr. Biggs asked how this report will differ from the 20th report on water and wastewater issues.

Dr. Collins responded that the letters and final report will be focused on a governance conversation and actions at the local level that prepare communities to respond. Federal and state governments can provide support, but local government and community groups perform the hands-on work to respond to climate emergencies, so the focus of the letters is on local jurisdictions and improving their capacity to respond. She highlighted the difference in capacity between San Diego and Imperial.

Mr. Alejandro Barcenas noted that the infrastructure and capacity in Nogales, Arizona, are significantly different from that of its sister city, Nogales, Sonora. Wastewater, stormwater and trash issues that originate in Sonora cross the border. He would like the border capacity issue expanded beyond California, particularly San Diego, which is economically better off than many border communities. For example,

Tijuana, Baja California, is better off than Nogales, Sonora, so the situations of each sister-city pair along the border are very different. He would like to include that perspective. Dr. Collins noted that the comparison between San Diego and Imperial has applications across the border region, through Arizona and into the Lower Rio Grande Valley. For each letter it will be necessary to ensure that the accompanying case study highlights the overall border region by moving from the microlevel to the macrolevel and bringing in the cases of other cities, such as Nogales.

Dr. Carrillo Guerrero called attention to the opportunities to highlight collaboration because there is a great deal of willingness to work across the border to improve communities on both sides. Her foundation supports binational cooperation through a funding program in which each project includes a U.S. partner working alongside a Mexican partner; projects that do not include binational partnerships are not eligible for funding. The Board's letters can highlight the benefits of collaboration for U.S. communities from that perspective. In 2025, the San Diego Foundation plans to fund a binational project for emergency preparedness in the region and is looking for partners on the Mexican side to develop a bi-regional preparedness plan for extreme events. The El Paso Community Foundation also funds some binational projects, and Dr. Carrillo Guerrero has connections with this organization, if needed. Dr. Collins agreed that collaborations should be highlighted in each letter.

Dr. Mumme thought that the San Diego–Tijuana case study is beneficial because it represents the optimal case along the border in many ways. He added that the Board must treat capacity as a multilevel governance problem, which includes binational programs already in place. GNEB can identify deficiencies along the border and opportunities for capacity building. States generally withdraw from commitments to border cities and counties. He would like the letters to address this concern. Dr. Collins thought that this subject would fit in topic #3, within the discussion of the past and present of the La Paz Agreement.

Public Comments

Mr. Green called for public comments. No comments were offered.

Discuss and Approve Proposed Charge Topics (Continued)

GNEB Members

Dr. Collins asked any members who did not approve of the proposed charge topics to offer their objections; no dissenting comments were offered.

Mr. Lopez liked that the work plan includes four accessible components that would each touch different audiences. He supports the idea of presenting the letters regionally to different border stakeholder groups. In addition to the President and Congress, many state, county and local governments would appreciate pertinent policy recommendations. He noted that AmCham, the Mexican–American chamber of commerce, has been in Mexico for more than 100 years and is creating a new northwestern region chapter. American companies in Mexico (e.g., Colgate, Ford, Palmolive) are realizing that the border region is important to the U.S. and Mexican agendas because of nearshoring, and private-sector entities are eager to be a part of this trend. Nearshoring creates migration issues, and urbanization has risen during the 40 years since the La Paz Agreement at a rate that has overwhelmed many municipalities. The federal government needs to do more to help local governments manage the impacts of migration on both sides of the border.

Dr. Collins asked the GNEB members to consider how to capture the responses various groups may have to the letters and include these responses in the final report. Ms. Becker responded that Board members should solicit input from outside persons who can address the issues. The task at hand appears to be to determine what connections the Board has and gather meaningful information from these outside

perspectives. How can the Board connect resources on behalf of the border cities to aid the conversation and ultimately influence the President and Congress? And through what lenses? The Board currently has proposed three lenses, two of which (tribes and disadvantaged communities) are defined. The third, industry, can be any type of industry and includes businesses in and around the affected communities. A governance focus on border cities includes mayors and councils of governments, and the Board must decide how broad the outreach should be to be representative.

Dr. Pohlman commented that some professional societies related to infrastructure perform international work, such as the U.S. Green Building Council and American Society of Civil Engineers. Dr. Collins suggested that the three different lenses could be subsets within the community and outreach workgroup. A GNEB member thought that the business community can provide comments because of the movement on the border around the semiconductor and mining industries. The expansion of the Bridge of the Americas Land Port of Entry near El Paso is causing community concern because of its effect on air quality. The business sector needs to be part of the solution and aware of GNEB's efforts.

Dr. Collins asked the Board members to think about the stakeholders in their networks so that a list of stakeholders and where they fit into the report can be generated and incorporated into the work plan. She thought that the community and outreach workgroup could meet soon and discuss how to ensure that all of the lenses are represented; she will work with Dr. Coronado and Mr. Green to establish this workgroup as soon as possible. She asked Mr. Range to serve on the group because he had volunteered for the tribal lens workgroup.

Dr. Carrillo Guerrero asked whether GNEB can conduct online surveys; this approach would allow the Board to connect with different community members more quickly. Dr. Collins thought that this approach might be a possibility.

Dr. Brown noted that a number of Board members represent regional economic development organizations and can assist with ensuring that the business lens is captured. GNEB also can explore similar types of organizations along the border as a method for obtaining the business community's perspective to add to the discussion. Mr. Lopez agreed with this approach, noting that some of the Board members could identify these organizations along the border and determine which to connect with. Dr. Ford is another Board member who represents a private entity.

Dr. Rincón pointed to EPA's formal tribal consultation process, which the Office of International and Tribal Affairs uses to obtain tribal input for EPA's border programs, noting that GNEB could consult tribes for input on its letters and report. Dr. Collins would like to learn more about the formal process.

Mr. Barcenas commented that the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas is located in the border region and has a large impact on both sides of the border, as does a maquila association. It would be helpful to include perspectives from these industries about their impacts on the environment. A GNEB member added that the Arizona–Mexico Commission comprises different sectors, including the private sector.

Committee Assignments and Process/Timing for Completing GNEB Comment Letters #1–2 *Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB*

Dr. Collins presented the proposed timeline and asked whether the Board members had any objections. None were offered.

Dr. Collins would like to establish the community and outreach workgroup and the workgroups for letters #1 and #2 by the end of June. A subplan to the work plan will detail how the community and outreach workgroup will obtain feedback to ensure that all of the lenses are represented.

Dr. Brown asked that target dates for each letter to be completed be included in the timeline. After the workgroups have met and provided input, Dr. Collins will determine specific dates.

Dr. Collins asked those GNEB members who have not already volunteered for a workgroup to do so via email. Dr. Carrillo Guerrero, Dr. Ford and Mr. Anthony Isham volunteered to serve on the community and outreach workgroup.

Next Steps and Wrap-Up

Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Dr. Collins reiterated that the next steps will be to establish and convene the workgroups and finalize the work plan. The minutes from this meeting will be available in the next few weeks. She looks forward to working with the Board members during the next 18 months on beneficial ideas and solutions to address the topic areas.

Adjournment

Dr. Collins and Mr. Green thanked the Board members for their efforts. Dr. Collins adjourned the meeting at 2:03 p.m. EDT.

Action Items

- All GNEB members will—
 - Consider the stakeholders in their network and how they can fit into the report and provide the information to Dr. Collins.
 - Volunteer for a writing workgroup if they have not done so already.
- Dr. Beavers will serve on the writing workgroups for topics #1 and #2.
- Dr. Biggs will serve on the writing workgroups for topics #2 and #4.
- Dr. Carrillo Guerrero will serve on the topic #4 writing workgroup, community and outreach workgroup, and translation workgroup.
- Dr. Collins will formally add tribal nations to topic #4 in the work plan.
- Dr. Collins and Mr. Green will share the Board's revised, solidified work plan with Dr. Tenggardjaja.
- Dr. Collins, Dr. Coronado and Mr. Green will convene the community and outreach workgroup as soon as possible.
- Dr. Coronado will help proofread the translation of GNEB's 20th report.
- Dr. Ford will serve on the writing workgroups for topics #2–4 and the community and outreach workgroup.

- Ms. Giblin will serve on the translation workgroup.
- Mr. Green will schedule a meeting with Drs. Collins, Coronado and Tenggardjaja to identify how to address the binational perspective.
- Mr. Isham will serve on the community and outreach workgroup.
- Mr. Kirschner will serve on the writing workgroup for topic #2.
- Mr. Marruffo will serve on the translation workgroup.
- Dr. Payne will serve on the writing workgroup for topic #2.
- Dr. Pohlman will serve on the writing workgroups for topics #1 and #4.
- Mr. Range will serve on the writing workgroup for topic #2, as well as the tribal lens and community and outreach workgroups.
- Dr. Rincón will serve on the translation workgroup.
- Mr. Roy will serve on the writing workgroup for topic #4 and gather information about the capacity of tribal nations in the U.S.–Mexico border region to manage environmental infrastructure challenges.
- Mr. Suarez and Mr. Lopez will inform USAID and the U.S. embassy and border consulates in Mexico about GNEB’s work.
- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will assist with topics #1–3.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Chair

Kimberly Collins, Ph.D.

Executive Director, William and Barbara
Leonard Transportation Center
Professor, Department of Public Administration
California State University, San Bernardino
San Bernardino, CA

Nonfederal, State, Local and Tribal Members

Alejandro R. Barcenas

Community Services/Public Works Director
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Kathryn Becker, J.D.

Assistant General Counsel and Tribal Liaison
Office of General Counsel
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San Diego, CA

Christopher Brown, Ph.D.

Professor
Department of Geography
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Yamilett K. Carrillo Guerrero, Ph.D.

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Binational Resilience Initiative
Environmental Initiatives
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Larisa Ann Ford, Ph.D.

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Pamela M. Giblin, Esq.

Board Member
B Carbon
Austin, TX

Vice Chair

Irasema Coronado, Ph.D.

Director and Professor
School of Transborder Studies
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ

Melisa E. Gonzalez-Roses

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Development
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Weslaco, TX

Josiah Heyman, Ph.D.

Director
Center for Interamerican and Border Studies
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, TX

Mignonne D. Hollis

Executive Director
Arizona Regional Economic Development
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Richard Kirschner

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Mario Lopez

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Joaquin Marruffo

Border Programs Coordinator
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Tucson, AZ

Stephen Mumme, Ph.D.

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Department of Political Science
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Fort Collins, CO

Jonathan Niermann

Commissioner
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Austin, TX

Rob Roy

Director
Environmental Protection Office
La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians
Pauma Valley, CA

Christy Sangster-Begay

Director
Department of Environmental Protection
San Carlos Apache Tribe
San Carlos, CA

Federal Members

**International Boundary and Water
Commission**

Maria-Elena Giner, Ph.D.

Commissioner
U.S. Section
International Boundary and Water Commission
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U.S. Department of Agriculture

Carlos Suarez

State Conservationist (State Director)
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**U.S. Department of Commerce—National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

Jeffrey L. Payne, Ph.D.

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U.S. Department of Commerce
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Designated Federal Officer

Eugene Green

Designated Federal Officer
Good Neighbor Environmental Board
Federal Advisory Committee Management and
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Office of Inclusive Excellence
Office of Mission Support
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
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El Paso Border Office

Region 6

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Region 9

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Communication Lead

U.S.–Mexico Border Program

Region 9

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Rebecca Hardin
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Jim Rizk
Special Counsel
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
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Kimberly Tenggardjaja, Ph.D.
Director for Nature Conservation
White House Council on Environmental Quality
Sacramento, CA

Appendix B: Video/Teleconference Agenda



Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB)

Virtual Meeting: Microsoft Teams

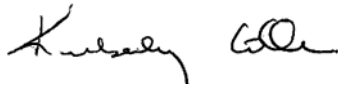
May 29, 2024, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. EDT

AGENDA

- 11:00–11:20 a.m.** Welcome and Member Roll Call
- Eugene Green, GNEB Designated Federal Officer, Federal Advisory Committee Management and Oversight Division (FACMOD)
 - Robbie Young-Mackall, Director, FACMOD
 - Dr. Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 11:20–11:30 a.m.** Overview of Agenda and Meeting Goals/Objectives
- Dr. Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 11:30–11:45 a.m.** Council on Environmental Quality’s Response to GNEB’s 20th Report
- Dr. Kimberly Tenggardjaja, Director for Nature Conservation, CEQ, and Liaison to GNEB
- 11:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.** GNEB Workgroup Report Out on Proposed Charge Topics
- Dr. Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
 - GNEB Workgroup Members
- 12:15–1:15 p.m.** Discuss and Approve Proposed Charge Topics
- GNEB Members
- 1:15–1:30 p.m.** Break
- 1:30–1:45 p.m.** Public Comments
- 1:45–2:30 p.m.** Discuss and Approve Proposed Charge Topics (Continued)
- GNEB Members
- 2:30–2:50 p.m.** Committee Assignments and Process/Timing for Completing GNEB Comment Letters #1–2
- Dr. Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 2:50–3:00 p.m.** Next Steps and Wrap-Up
- Dr. Kimberly Collins, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 3:00 p.m.** Adjournment

Appendix C: Chair Certification of Minutes

I, Kimberly Collins, Chair of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB), certify that this is the final version of the complete minutes for the video/teleconference held on May 29, 2024, and that the minutes accurately reflect the discussions and decisions of the meeting.



Kimberly Collins, GNEB Chair

July 24, 2024

Date