



# News Release

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## ***State Officials Provide Fire Training South of the Border*** *Training part of a transborder agreement with Mexico*

SACRAMENTO – Today, Cal/EPA’s Border Affairs Unit completed training for 160 firefighters from Mexico. The specialized training focused on fighting waste tire fires which are particularly dangerous. The training was funded through a \$28,000 grant from the Border 2010 Program and the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and covered environmental, safety and tactical aspects of fighting tire pile fires.

“We have been working with our partners from Mexico for years to find solutions to our shared environmental challenges along our shared border, and tire piles are one of the issues we are addressing,” said Ricardo Martinez, Cal/EPA’s Deputy Secretary for Border Affairs.

Tire pile fires are a particular threat to California, as tire fires can burn for weeks, adversely affecting air quality and putting a significant strain on emergency and economic resources. Tire piles also serve as breeding ground for mosquitoes, rodents and other diseases. The West Nile virus, dengue fever and malaria already have been associated with tire piles.

In California, an estimated 42 million waste tires are generated each year. The State currently diverts 75 percent of those tires from going to landfills or tire disposal sites. Waste tires are now being diverted to make Rubberized Asphalt Concrete (RAC) for roads; crumb rubber playgrounds; landscape maintenance; Alternative Daily Cover for landfills; and for engineering purposes.

“The MOU we signed with Mexico in 2008 is driving these kinds of projects and we are committed to sharing equipment, best practices, technology and training with our partners in Mexico to benefit both our economies and environments.”

This training course is a result of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed in 2008 between Cal/EPA, Department of Food and Agriculture, California Natural Resources Agency, and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the United Mexican States. The agreement is helping to address climate change and other environmental issues to enhance environmental protection policies and sustainable natural resources.

“This is just a small part of California’s work with Mexico,” said Martinez. “It highlights the importance of partnerships and helping our neighbors.”

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### **Additional Projects with Mexico:**

- Through the California-Mexico Border Relations Council, Cal/EPA will donate 5 fire trucks to the State of Baja California in 2010 along with \$28,000 for additional equipment and training.
- In January 2010, Cal/EPA partnered with the State Water Board to train wastewater treatment operators in Mexico to improve and protect water quality. The training course included topics such as an overview of Mexico's regulations for the treatment of waste discharges, sources of domestic and industrial waste, as well as sewage treatment plant operation and maintenance and advanced treatment.
- Through Cal/EPA's efforts, and the Climate Action Reserve, Mexico has developed two protocols addressing reduction of greenhouse gas emissions at landfills and at livestock operations, such as dairy and swine farms. These protocols will serve to promote reduction of GHG in a shared region.

To support environmental protection along the border region, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger created the landmark California-Mexico Border Relations Council (AB 3021, Núñez, 2006). Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection serves as the Council Chair. Members of the Council include the Secretaries of the Natural Resources Agency; Health and Human Services Agency; Business, Transportation and Housing Agency; Department of Food and Agriculture; and the California Emergency Management Agency. The Council oversees and collaborates on California-Mexico border issues, and has the authority to identify new Border priorities and fundable projects in the areas of infrastructure, trade, environment, health and security while supporting current and ongoing activities such as the Border Governors Conference, trade missions, border workgroups, and coordinating specific future projects with Mexico.

More information on the California-Mexico Border Relations Council can be found at [www.calepa.ca.gov/Border/CMBRC/](http://www.calepa.ca.gov/Border/CMBRC/). For more information on the Border Environmental Program go to [www.calepa.ca.gov/border/](http://www.calepa.ca.gov/border/).