

CALIFORNIA-MEXICO BORDER RELATIONS COUNCIL



MINUTES

California-Mexico Border Relations Council Meeting

July 15, 2015 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
2375 Northside Dr.
San Diego, California 92108

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by Chairman Rodriguez

I. Roll call:

∴ The following Council members were present:

*Secretary Matt Rodriguez, California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA),
Chair*

*Secretary Diana Dooley, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) was
represented by April Fernandez, California Department of Public Health (CDPH)*

Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

Secretary John Laird, Resources Agency (Resources), via teleconference

Secretary Mark Ghilarducci, California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES),

Secretary Brian Kelly, Business, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)

*Deputy Director Louis Stewart, Governor's Office of Business and Economic
Development (GoBiz)*

II. Welcome:

*Chairman Rodriguez provided opening remarks and welcomed invited guests and the
public.*

III. Introductions:

Guests from Mexico in attendance included:

*Baja Secretary for Environmental Protection Carlos Graizbord, Heidy Salum, Binational
Liaison for the Government of Baja California; Kristofer Patrón, Chief of Smog Check
for the City of Tijuana*

Guest from Ca Legislative offices:

Diana Spen of Speaker Atkins office, Mabi Castro of Sen Ben Hueso's office

IV. Vote on Minutes:

5 members were in favor, no nays, no abstentions - Unanimously passed

V. Report

*An overview of the Annual CMBRC report to the Legislature was presented by Genesis
Rivas. The overview gave the highlights of the activities conducted by the multiple
agencies representing the CMBRC. The annual report was voted on by the Council
and approved to send to the legislature. 5 members were in favor, no nays, no
abstentions - Unanimously passed*

VI. **New River Updates:**

::: Kevin Bryan (consultant for the New River Committee) presented an overview of the New River Committee and The New River Strategic Plan:

Mr. Bryan provided a briefing on the status of the development for a New River Parkway. A description of amenities such as walkways and shade structures and Park benches which are to be constructed. He also expressed the limitations in funding, currently they are working with funds provide through a federal transportation grant and from the California Natural Resources Parkway Project. The New River Committee has decided to spend funds on developing a full set of plans for the parkway project which can then be completed in standalone phases as money becomes available. Currently there is no room in the budget for any changes in the plan as of now the budget is short approximately \$50K for this part and \$1 Million over all. Additional money is being sought from other sources such as the water bond to fill the funding gaps. planning and engineering should be complete by January 2016. Water quality concerns are being addressed by the Regional Water Board, improvements have been made however issues remain such as pathogens and odor due to overflows from across the border. Secretary Kelly suggested looking into the Active Transportation fund for the possibility of competing for additional funding to cover the short fall. Ben de Alba was asked to follow up with the CNRC.

VII. **Tire and Solid Waste:**

::: Ken DaRosa of CalRecycle presented an overview of the Border Tire Plan

Provided an overview of the work CalRecycle is doing through the MOU with Mexico, some recent legislation in California, assistance and funding being provided for cleanup work in the Tijuana River Valley, also provided an update on the status of the Tire flow study being conducted by San Diego State University to be completed fall of 2016. Ken described recent legislation SB-83 which broadened CalRecycles planning responsibility along the border, appropriated \$300K to the CMBRC and established a Work group tasked with developing solutions for wastes tires, solid waste and sediment along the border. Secretary Rodriguez directed the Council to appoint a member from each agency to for the Regional Solid Waste Working Group per SB-83 and that recommendations for the \$300K be presented to the Council at the next meeting. Also requested that CalRecycle look into how to address the issue of tires flowing into the estuary from Mexico and should also look into the limits of California's flexibility on what can be done across the border to address the issue. Director Ghilarducci invited Ken to meet and see if Hazard Mitigation funds could be used for sediment clean up. Copies of the tire plan were provided at the meeting.

VIII. **Border Projects:**

::: Each member presented an overview of border activities happening at their agency:

- California Environmental Protection Agency

::: Fernando Amador (Air Resources Board) gave an update on the California – Baja California Air Monitoring Program. ARB continues to provide support to Baja California for the Air Monitoring network. ARB expects to be conducting PM2.5 study in Mexicali by the end of 2015. ARB and Mexico have agreed to set up monitoring stations in Tijuana Otay Mesa area. Additionally, ARB, San Diego County and the US Federal Government agreed and installed an Air monitoring station at the San Ysidro border crossing.

::: Genesis Rivas of CalEPA provided a summary of two Greenhouse Gas Reduction (GGRF) workshops conducted in San Diego and El Centro in May 2015. The purpose of the workshops was to inform the public, Nonprofits and community leaders of the GGRF programs, assistance with application questions.

::: Vanessa Galviz provided a summary of updates to the CalEnviroScreen tool. She describe the reasoning for the tools updates indicators for exposure including

environmental conditions, biological traits and others. In order to make the improvements to CalEnviroScreen OEHHA is looking at environmental data from Mexico for maquiladoras and Airports in Mexico along the border to account for their contributions for exposure on the US side of the border. OEHHA is working with ARB on the collection of reliable air quality data from Mexico including data from the two new sites (San Ysidro and Otay Mesa). OEHHA will be installing 12 low cost Air Monitors along the border to collect additional data.

::: Jose Figueroa of the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board provided an update of permitting and enforcement actions taken in the Imperial Valley which are a direct link to the recommendations of the New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan. Jose explained issues which have arisen from the Mexican side of the border due to the bypasses of flows when repairs are being made to the wastewater system in Mexicali. He stated that a letter has been sent to the IBWC and the USEPA requesting they address the issue with their counterparts and that Mexico develop a plan to deal with the flow bypasses. The Regional Board continues to participate on the Binational Technical Committee to stay informed of the issues and to express California's concerns with the condition of the New River. According to Jose Mexico plans on investing 27 million pesos to upgrade their systems.

- Health and Human Services Agency

::: Esmeralda Iniguez-Stevens of the California Department of Public Health reported on the various binational programs related to infectious diseases. Surveillance and communication are key in detecting and monitoring infectious diseases. They are the Communication Liaison between CDPH & Baja California Public Health Officials. Their office participates in Surveillance & Monitoring of Infectious Diseases and works with Baja California to investigations related to disease outbreaks. They work on case involving valley fever, influenza and acute respiratory diseases. Current priorities are vector born diseases, her presentation included slides with affected area in California. There is evidence of tropical disease appearing in the border area through vector transmission. Tires are perfect habitats for Mosquito's larva to live and develop. Not many cases tropical diseases have been detected to date. Working with other border states to share information related to vector born diseases. CDPH is working with other states US and Mexican states as well as both Federal governments on detection and response to disease outbreaks.

- CalOES

::: Mark Ghilarducci stated that CalOES is working with Homeland Security and CDPH on expanding the Bio Surveillance Watch Program and working on a new program taking advantage of emerging technologies. The Director suggested getting together in the following year to discuss these new technologies.

- Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

::: Sergio Pallares of CalTrans Mentioned 3 projects currently underway along the Ca-Mexico Border: First, non-motorized crossings are being looked at for efficiency (i.e. Pedestrian and bicycle crossings) and how to improve the border crossing experience, information to be included in the Border Master Plan. The second is a study to measure the impacts of border delays both economic and environmental. The third is the construction of the new port of entry "Otay Mesa East" the first of its kind border crossing, a private public partnership.

::: Mitchell Beachem from National City spoke about the cross border railroad which has been having difficulty getting traction, according to Mr. Beachem progress on this project has stopped due to the issue in Mexico. Secretary Kelly mentioned that his office is familiar with this project and the infrastructure issues that are causing the project to move at a slower pace at this time.

- IX. **Tijuana River Updates:**
::: David Gibson of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board described the differences between Mexico and the U.S. in capacity to deal with border environmental issues. He also expressed flood concerns from an expected strong El Niño storm season. Mr. Gibson spoke about the Tijuana Estuary describing it as a bi-national watershed. Mentioned the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRC), a collaboration of over 30 agencies working together to resolve issues in the Tijuana River watershed. The TRVRC is working with the Federal water agencies of both countries on amending the 1944 water treaty between the U.S. and Mexico to address issues of sediment and trash, a Minute is expected to be signed before year end. Described several on the ground projects being worked by the TRVRT removing, disposing of sediment, trash and restoration of wetlands. Nelson Sloan quarry and the Brown property restoration are two of those projects. Tire Cleanup is a priority due to their creation of mosquito habitat described in the CDPH presentation. A request for \$1.5 million from the Cleanup and Abatement account has been submitted and is being held by the State Board. The TRVRT developed a Recovery Strategy, a request for the Council to recognize the strategy is requested. Spoke about the Tijuana River Action Month and the participation of the Recovery Team and CalRecycle. Secretary Rodriguez, stated he would send a letter in support of the Recovery Strategy and recommend that CalRecycle continue working with the Regional Board on these projects.
- X. **Border 2020: • United States Environmental Protection Agency**
::: Tomas Torres acknowledged the Border 2020 Regional Task Force for assisting in pushing forward the following projects: Waste water treat improvements \$680 Million invested on Mexican side of border. Stated that over the last 10 years approximately 20 million tires have been removed, trash cleanups have taken place in conjunction with California agencies. Tomas spoke of the creation of the Sister City project assisting provide better communication and cross border Emergency Response assistance includes 15 major cities along U.S.-Mexico border. An idling study was funded for Imperial County APCD. Collected 22 hundred tons of trash in border community clean ups with groups such as Wild Coast. Tomas talked about the work with ARB to conduct a PM 2.5 study in Mexicali and to install an Air monitor at the San Ysidro port of Entry. USEPA will be funding a project for cleaning trash in the New River in Mexicali. Requested assistance from CalRecycle on developing a Sustainable Materials Management workshop.
- XI. **California-Mexico MOU's:**
::: Aimee Barnes of CalEPA, reported on the Climate MOU and the progress of the committee and work group's especially wild fires, vehicle emissions and air quality.
::: Emilio Camacho of CEC, reported on the progress for the Energy MOU with Mexico, partnership with CENER has been solidified and working plan is complete and work has begun. Trade mission has been set up to visit Mexico City and Monterrey, Mx.
::: Ben DeAlba of CalSTA, reported on the Transportation MOU, he referenced the border crossing work that was presented by Sergio Pallares earlier and expressed the importance that these MOU's bring in assisting with Cross border collaboration.
- XII. **Border Related Legislation:**
::: Tara Dias-Andres provided a briefing on both SB 83 as it relates to the CMBRC. The legislation provided \$300K to support activities of the Council and changed the makeup of the Council as well as directed the Council to establish the Regional Solid Waste Working Group. Also briefed on proposed bill AB 965, the bill is specific for cleaning up of the New River which also added the USEPA as an ex-officio member to the Council and also added the Secretary of State Consumer Services and Housing Agency. Also allow council to receive funds from the water bond.
- XIII. **Baja California Border Program Updates;**
::: Secretary Graizbord listed projects SPA is working on. These include: air quality, water quality, regional land use, solid waste and construction waste, environmental

education, natural resources, regulations review process and simplification, environmental economics. SPA is partnering with Private companies and nonprofit organizations for urban reforestation projects. Also discussed is a public private partnership project for the reduction of ag burning. Secretary Rodriguez asked how else California can help or work more closely with SPA. Create more Joint management offices for sharing resources.

XIV. **Public Comment;**

::: Krostofor Patron, of the city of Tijuana Environmental Protection Office, Eager to work with California and would like to make contact with CalRecycle.

::: Chris Peregrin (California State Parks) commented on the work parks does in Goat Canyon and requests that CalRecycle continue assisting with the clean ups of that area.

::: Carl Nettleton talked about his project called Dos Puertas, creating meeting place at the border with access from both sides of the border without the issue associated with border crossings.

XV. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM by Chairman Rodriguez