

# CALIFORNIA-MEXICO BORDER RELATIONS COUNCIL

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## MINUTES

### **California-Mexico Border Relations Council Meeting**

July 12, 2016 | 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

2375 Northside Drive

San Diego, California 92108

**The meeting was called to order at 1:08 PM by Chairman Rodriquez**

#### **I. Roll call**

The following Council members were present:

- **Secretary Matthew Rodriquez**, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), Chair
- **Director Mark Ghilarducci**, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
- **Assistant Secretary Ben De Alba**, representing Secretary Brian Kelly, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)
- **Special Assistant Catherine Ohaegbu**, representing Acting Secretary Alexis Podesta, Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH)
- **Deputy Director Brian Peck**, representing Director Panorea Avdis, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz)
- **Director Hector Aguirre**, Border Liaison Office, San Diego – United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)
- **Secretary Karen Ross**, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) – *via conference line*
- **Secretary John Laird**, Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) – *via conference line*
- **Chief April Fernandez**, Office of Binational Border Health, representing Secretary Diana Dooley, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS)

A quorum of the Council members was established.

#### **II. Welcome and Introductions**

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Chair Rodriguez provided opening remarks and welcomed the public. Guests from Mexico in attendance included:

- **Director Antonio Rosquillas**, Civil Protection, City of Tijuana
- **Deputy Director Mario Rodriguez**, Civil Protection, State of Baja California
- **Heidy Salum**, International Relations Border Council

Guests from California Legislative offices:

- **Yolanda Apalategui**, Senior Policy Advisor, Senator Benjamin Hueso's office

### III. **Vote on Minutes from February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 Meeting**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Council Member Ghilarducci. All members in attendance were in favor. No nays. No abstentions. **Minutes were therefore unanimously approved.**

### IV. **Conflict of Interest Code Adoption**

Chair Rodriguez mentioned that in the past the Council was exempt from the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) economic reporting requirements because the Council did not have any specific decision making authority or a budget, thus members were not required to file a Form 700. With the appropriation of \$300,000 in grant funds last year, the Council (and not the Chair) would be making decisions on the grants and members would no longer be exempt from FPPC filing requirements. Chair Rodriguez stated that attorneys at CalEPA were looking into adopting a conflict of interest code for the Council and would have more to report at a later date.

What this means for the council is:

- Members of the Council will have to file a Form 700 with the FPPC relating to their work on the Council

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- Secretaries should make formal designations/appointments of representatives to the Council for future meetings, which will help identify who will need to file a Form 700

## V. California-Mexico Border Relations Council Annual Report to the Legislature

An overview of the Annual CMBRC report to the Legislature was presented by Nilan Watmore. The overview gave the highlights of the activities conducted by the multiple agencies representing the CMBRC. Some of the accomplishments included (but were not limited to):

- Continued work to carry out goals of 4 MOUs signed by Governor Brown and Mexico with support from several Mexican states for the Under 2 MOU
- \$300,000 appropriation for waste tire cleanup by the Legislature
- Funding for Operation Stonegarden (enhancement of law enforcement at the Border Region) included \$9.3 million from CalOES and \$1.1 million from the federal government
- AB 60 (driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants) – 830,000 applied, and 605,000 were issued by DMV in 2015

A motion to approve the report and submit to the Legislature was made by Council Member Ghilarducci. All members in attendance were in favor. No nays. No abstentions.

**The report was therefore unanimously approved and will be submitted to the Legislature.**

## VI. Update on the New River

Jose Angel, Executive Director for the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board provided updates on the revised recommendations to the New River Strategic Implementation Plan as they relate to the recommended actions for Calexico.

- Director Angel mentioned that his remarks focus on the revised structural recommendations for the proposed Calexico River Parkway, which is currently

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underway and in the first phase (infrastructure design and environmental documentation)

- Director Angel is assisting Calexico in obtaining Proposition 1 funds, which he believes the city would qualify for approximately \$500,000 in technical assistance. In addition, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is willing to provide around \$150,000 of In-Kind services. Director Angel believes Calexico will have around \$650,000 to \$750,000 in funds in addition to any funding the Council can provide.
- Director Angel also mentioned the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) is willing to provide some In-Kind services and the goal is to for the project to explicitly reference the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan (IRWMP) for the Imperial Valley so that Calexico can qualify for additional funds available through various water bonds.
- In terms of timing, Director Angel stated that the Prop. 1 funding can take 2 to 3 months, but he is hopeful that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will have a resolution in September along with potential Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs). Following the securing of funds and contractual agreements, it will take approximately a year and half to complete phase 1.

## Questions and Comments from Council members:

Chair Rodriquez mentioned the project would be beneficial for the Calexico area and thanked Director Angel for being the project champion, in addition to his other role as Executive Director of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Chair Rodriquez also mentioned that additional funding from the Council is something that will be considered for the first phase in addition to funds already being pursued such as Prop. 1 and SEPs working their way through enforcement programs.

Chair Rodriquez pointed out the departure of Aimee Barnes, CalEPA's Deputy Secretary for Border and Intergovernmental Affairs, who assisted with New River projects at the Border. While she remains under contract through the end of July, her replacement, Alexa Kleysteuber will start on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Alexa holds dual citizenship with the U.S. and Chile and represented Chile in the international climate negotiations with the United Nations. More recently she has been advising Latin American countries on how they

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might adopt policies to deal with climate change issues. She has gotten up to speed on issues at the Border, including the New River.

Member Ghilarducci also mentioned that he is appreciative of Director Angel's efforts on this project.

## VII. Update on Regional Solid Waste Working Group

Ken DaRosa, Chief Deputy Director at CalRecycle provided background and context on the Regional Solid Waste Working Group

- The Working Group was established via trailer bill as part of the Budget Act of 2015 and was tasked with developing and coordinating long-term solutions for addressing and remediating problems associated with waste tires, solid waste and sedimentation along the border region.
- In addition, there was a \$300,000 appropriation to the Council for this effort and there will be updates on the status of the two pilot projects that were funded from this money.
- CalRecycle presented a plan for establishing the Working Group to the Council one year ago with the following scope:
  - Update the tire flow and tire management plan studies that CalRecycle had done in 2009 and 2012
  - Review of the recommendations from those studies
  - A revised set of recommendations derived from the review and how they would be amended based on the current status of tire flow
  - Long-term clean up needs, projects and opportunities as well as short-term cleanup projects and recommendations on how to leverage cooperation between the U.S./Mexican states and federal governments

Chief Deputy DaRosa also mentioned a forthcoming presentation on a preliminary draft strategic plan relative to solid waste, waste tires and sedimentation. The Working Group is not looking for any action by the Council on this draft strategic plan. It is only intended to be an update.

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## VIII. Update on WILDCOAST Project

John Holder, the Border Coordinator for WILDCOAST, gave an update on their waste tire pilot program in Tijuana.

- WILDCOAST is a nonprofit group that conserves coastal and marine ecosystems and wildlife throughout California and Mexico.
- About 2-3 million tires are exported to Mexico each year from California and this is problematic in terms of managing these waste tires not only in Tijuana but in California as well.
- The Tijuana River Valley contains over 18,000 acres of protected areas and public recreational areas including the Border Field State Park, the Tijuana River Regional Park and the Tijuana River Estuary all of which are impacted by waste tires and debris after a storm event.
- The main objectives of the pilot project were to:
  - Collect and recover 100,000 waste tires from areas near the international boundary
  - Shred and collect the waste tires
  - Demonstrate the viability of a waste tire derived product market in Mexico
- Project launched on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and focuses on Canyon Laureles and Canyon Matadero in Tijuana
  - Main project partners were at launch and included the Secretary for Environmental Protection for the State of Baja California (SPA), the private sector partner GEN (responsible for collecting and shredding the tires), and representatives from the media and U.S. Consulate in Tijuana
  - Collection events in May and June resulted in the collection of 3,150 waste tires from Canyon Laureles and Canyon Matadero
- Mr. Holder hopes to see larger amounts of tire collection in the fall after wet weather events.

## Questions and Comments from Council members:

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Chair Rodriguez asked for clarification on the number of tires collected. Mr. Holder stated that there were 3,150 tires collected over a period of two months with a staff of about 20 from GEN. Chair Rodriguez also asked if the tires were collected in Mexico. Mr. Holder confirmed they were.

Council member Ghilarducci wanted clarification on what happens to the shredded tire material. Mr. Holder stated that GEN is working with another company to sell the product to other companies who will then reuse that product in Mexico whether that is for asphalt or other purposes. Council member Ghilarducci also asked if the product was going back into Mexico. Mr. Holder confirmed they were and mentioned the long-term vision is to show there is a market for this product so that the shredding can happen in Tijuana and be reused in Mexico. Right now the City of Tijuana has an issue with the hundreds of thousands of tires that were collected.

## IX. Update on Sonoran Institute Project

Edith Santiago, Associate Director of the Colorado River Program for the Sonoran Institute gave an update on the integrated approach for addressing solid waste pollution sources in the New River, Calexico and Mexicali. Ms. Santiago also introduced Michelle Hernandez, who is the coordinator of this project.

- All of the water that flows through various drains goes to the New River
- The objective is to permanently reduce the illegal disposal of waste in drains in the city of Mexicali that contribute to the pollution of the New River
- There are four different components of this project with different goals:
  - *Sanitation* – remove 6,000 cubic meters of solid waste
  - *Communications* – promote the cleanup of drains in these areas by reaching about 100,000 people through a public outreach campaign
  - *Environmental education* – reach 10,000 students in the area to let them know the importance of these drains
  - *Assessment* – develop an action plan to address solid waste issues in the New River near Calexico

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- Funding for the project is provided by the Border Environmental Corporation Commission, U.S. EPA, CalEPA and the Sonoran Institute. In addition about 22 federal, state and municipal government agencies are also involved in this project. There are also some NGOs involved as well.
- Work has already begun on the Tula Drain
  - 490 cubic meters of waste including tires
  - 56 tires were removed and 41 of them were taken to the SPA tire disposal center
- The Collector and Mexicali drains will be addressed in later phases of the project
- Ms. Santiago concluded that the communications and environmental education components have been very successful and they are receiving enthusiastic responses from the community willing to help with cleanups through social media.

## **X. Update on Waste Tire Strategic Plan**

Jessica Sankus, an Executive Fellow with CalRecycle gave an update on the preliminary draft of the Solid Waste and Waste Tire Strategic Plan. Ms. Sankus emphasized that this is informational and not intended to be an action item.

- Waste tires, solid waste and sediment continue to present a significant and persistent environmental issue along the California-Mexico border.
- The preliminary strategic draft plans an outline on how agencies (as designated by the Council) and regional partners can identify and implement solutions for the management of these hazards.
- The draft is currently a preliminary document under development by the Border Region Solid Waste Working Group.
  - Decreased participation from key members prevented full composition of the strategic plan
  - Preliminary efforts to tailor guiding principles, draft goals and objectives and a scope of work was not affected by this decreased participation
- Consideration of guiding principles in relation to the scope of the strategic plan is key to preventing remediation and strategies that are created in a vacuum. These



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principles will ensure that we are considering the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the problems as we move forward.

- Through the preliminary goals and objectives outlined, the working group intends to fortify collaboration and communication between the many organizations invested in abatement of solid waste and waste tires in the border region.
- Informed and structured conversations moving forward regarding the continued construction of the strategic plan and implementation of the goals intends to deter duplicative actions and promote efficient allocation of resources.
- The goals are a platform to begin substantive conversations and focused objectives.
- The subsequent drafts of the strategic plan will reflect the priorities of the working group's broader membership upon potential reconstitution of the working group.
- The result of the pilot projects and the updated tire study are intended to inform the working group about reasonable and efficient strategies moving forward with further development of the strategic plan.
- These steps are consistent with the Waste Tire Strategic Plan proposal that was prepared and presented to the Council by CalRecycle on July 2015.
- The next steps of the working group will be decidedly more technical. Two areas that will be focused on are:
  - Developing and assessing funding needs (both short-term and long-term)
  - Looking at market derived solutions and strategies for these problems

## **Questions and Comments from Council members:**

Chair Rodriquez wanted to clarify that Ms. Sankus was recommending a reconstitution of the Regional Solid Waste Working Group and if it was something the Council should take action on. Ms. Sankus stated that this will be discussed in more detail by Chief Deputy DaRosa.

## **XI. Update on Tire Flow Study**

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Paul Ganster, Ph.D., from San Diego State University provided an update to the tire flow studies previously conducted in 2009 and 2012.

- The objectives of the study are to provide information to better understand the scope, nature, and logistics of the flow of used tires across the border, including:
  - Transportation and disposal in Baja California
  - Regulatory requirements and enforcement in Baja California
  - Waste tire infrastructure in Baja California
- The study will also be looking at improvements for waste tire issues in Baja California
  - Unauthorized waste tire piles
  - Formal and informal engineering use of waste tires
  - Priority list of remediation sites
  - Alternative uses
- Dr. Ganster mentioned the distinction between the terms “used tires” (unmounted but still usable on a vehicle) and “waste tires” (unmounted but not usable). The study pertains to “used tires” and not so much “waste tires.”
- A key element of the study is to determine the disposition of used tires that are transported across the border including whether or not they are:
  - Reused
  - Recycled into tire-derived products
  - Authorized civil engineering projects
  - Fuel in brick/cement kilns
  - Properly or illegally disposed
- The study will also try to estimate exports from Baja California of waste tires and tire-derived materials.
- Specifically, the study will:
  - Update the flow estimates from 2009 up to the present. The previous study only has data up to 2008. The informal part will be a challenge because the informal movement of goods across the border is just a characteristic of the border region. The initial sense is that Mexican Customs is functioning more efficiently and the flow of informal tires has decreased a bit.

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- Provide data on Mexican used tire import quotas and the permits and tracking systems within Mexico
- Describe in detail the tire disposal infrastructure including the administrative and regulatory agencies in Baja California
- Identify a range of opportunities for better collaboration across the border between California, Baja California and Mexican authorities
- Outline a comprehensive strategy for sustainable tire and waste management at the border region, particularly looking at viable alternative uses for scrap tires
- Dr. Ganster concluded that the later stages of the study will try to identify the alternative uses for scrap tires and why Mexican paving companies aren't using scrap tires in rubberized asphalt and what are the specific barriers.

Reynaldo Rojo-Mendonza, Professor at San Diego State University, provided an update on recent progress with the updated studies.

- Data collection began in February of 2016, with an expected completion date of February 2017. The report is due in December of 2017.
- This study will focus on collecting data from Mexican used tire importers and tire shops in different parts of the state. There are many used tire shops and there isn't a comprehensive list, so the study will do a convenience sample (rather than a representative sample) of used tires shops. However, every used tire importer that has permits to legally import tires from California will be interviewed.
- The total number of interviews will be around 270-280.
  - 84 interviews have been conducted to date with 19 being used tire importer and 64 being used tire shops.
- Preliminary results:
  - A single importer has a quota ranging from 50-15,000 used tires a month
  - Every year at least 850,000 used tires are imported into Mexico and this has been consistent since the conclusion of the previous study in 2009
- The survey is also looking at whether used tire importers or used tire shops are buying reusable tires not only from California but also from other Mexican companies. It is estimated that there are very few of these.

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- For used tire shops, the amount bought from used tire importers varies from 50 to 500. Most buy from importers themselves but a few buy from Mexico-based tire dealers.
- Some used tire shops are reporting that they buy directly from the U.S., which can be interpreted as tire shops that don't have an import permit but still manage to get tires from U.S.-based tire shops. The study will work with customs to look into other means of import in addition to the formal 850,000 annual quota.
- The study will also investigate the generation of waste tires per shop and how many they generate per month
  - Ranges from 20-100 per month
  - A vast majority state that they find it easy to dispose of tires
  - Formal collection centers in Tijuana, Mexicali and Ensenada provide receipts that can be used for the next import quota; however, the centers are currently at capacity
  - Half of the used tire shops report that they transport their own tires and that they picked up by a "recycler," which is an unknown entity.
  - Quite a few also mention "donating tires to the community", which could be interpreted as illegal dumping
  - About 20% claim they know of waste tire sites (500 or more tires)
- In addition to the survey, there have also been interview with:
  - SPA – agency in charge of solid waste management, particularly waste tires
  - Mexican Federation of Colleges of Civil Engineers
  - Federal Delegate in Tijuana of Mexico's Ministry of the Economy – agency that issues tire import permits
  - Municipal planners and solid waste division in Ensenada
- There is interest in information sharing via workshops
  - San Diego/Sacramento
  - Tijuana/Ensenada
  - Important for officials at CalEPA and CalRecycle to do site visits to get a visual of the problem

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- Dr. Ganster's participated in the Border 2020 Waste and Enforcement Task Force meeting in March
- A lot of people in Baja California are aware of the study and are willing to cooperate
- Information is also being shared with WILD Coast and their pilot project team
- There are have been monthly/bi-monthly meetings with Louis Berger who contracts with CalRecycle in assembly the final report

## **XII. Solid Waste Working Group Closing Remarks**

Chief Deputy DaRosa returned to the podium to acknowledge the presentations by John Holder, Edith Santiago, Dr. Ganster, Professor Rojo-Mendoza and Jessica Sankus. The Chief Deputy wanted to specifically recognize the work by Ms. Sankus, who has been CalRecycle's Executive Fellow since October 2015. The first draft of the Waste Tire Strategic Plan was entirely her work.

Chief Deputy DaRosa emphasized that what was presented before the Council was very much multi-media and multi-agency. These issues involve a lot of disciplines and involve a lot of local, regional, state and federal governments to address cleanup and restoration efforts.

Despite the momentum and positive work being done, the Working Group has seen decreased participation the last year. Chief Deputy DaRosa presented to the Council some recommendations for membership suggestions for reconstituting the Working Group and the next steps the Working Group will undertake to complete the strategic plan.

- The first phase was identifying the projects, assessing their viability, their appropriateness to be funded involved a broader context of Council membership and the Working Group members
- The second phase is a bit more technical defining these goals, what is practical, what are the reasonable timelines, what is the engineering, logistics and planning

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that needs to go on in the context of solid waste management, water quality, sedimentation and some of the public health elements tied to all of this

- What is being recommended for the Working Group is as follows:
  - Alex Rodarte & Heather Hickerson - CalEPA
  - Jose Angel - Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - David Gibson – San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - Chris Peregrin – California State Parks
  - Ken DaRosa & Jessica Sankus – CalRecycle
- 4-6 workshops will be established within the next 6 months to further define goals
- Broader membership of the Council should be part of the stakeholders

## **Questions and Comments from Council members:**

Deputy Director Peck asked if there will be flexibility in the membership of the Working Group in the future. Chief Deputy DaRosa mentioned that the work of the Group will be an evolving process and there will be opportunity to revisit membership of the Working Group as appropriate during various stages of the strategic plan development.

Deputy Director Peck also mentioned that the viable alternative uses for used tires is something that staff at Go-Biz could help with and contribute to that discussion.

Chair Rodriguez commented that the reconstitution was appropriate and wasn't inclined to take a formal vote at this time.

Chair Rodriguez also mentioned two new staff including a Deputy Director and Heather Hickerson, the Border Affairs Program Manager, who will participate in the waste tire discussions going forward.

## **XIII. Update on Zika Virus at the Border**

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Esmeralda Iniguez-Stevens, Ph.D., MPH with the California Department of Public Health's Office of Binational Border Health provided an update on vector-borne diseases in California particular as they relate to dengue, chikungunya and Zika.

- There are two primary vectors for the three diseases mentioned
  - *Aedes aegypti* – first noticed in California in 2013
  - *Aedes albopictus* – first noticed in California in 2011
- Theories as to why these mosquitoes are showing up in areas that do not have tropical climates include international tire trade as well as the importation of lucky bamboo plants.
- These mosquitoes are able to survive and reproduce in very small amounts of water. The eggs can be in dormant states for many months and will hatch when exposed to minimal water making them very difficult to eradicate.
- In San Diego County both vectors are present, while only *Aedes aegypti* is present in Imperial County.
- There are some counties in California with cases of travel acquired cases of dengue and chikungunya
- Statistics about chikungunya
  - 275 cases reported in 2015
  - 140 cases reported in 2014
  - Cases were from 30 different countries, with 199 returning to California counties with the existing vector
  - 67% of the cases were female
  - 8% of the cases required hospitalization
  - 91% of the cases has reported travel to Latin American countries
  - Of the 391 total cases between 2014 and 2015, most reported travel to mainly Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua\
- Statistics about dengue
  - From 2010 to 2015, there were a total of 581 cases
  - 137 cases reported in 2015 from travel to 23 countries
  - 11 with invasive *Aedes*, with 95 cases returning to California counties with the existing vector;

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- Of the 95 cases, 76 were potentially viremic, 54% of the cases were female, 32% required hospitalization and 45% had traveled to Latin America (primarily Mexico and El Salvador)
- Total of 581 cases between 2010 and 2015, primarily imported from Mexico and India
- Statistics about Zika
  - 1,133 cases nationally from 2015 to July 6, 2016
  - Mexico has had 667 cases from 2015 to July 1, 2016, primarily in southern parts of the country; bulk of the cases are in Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas
  - In California there have been 77 imported cases of Zika from 2015 to July 8, 2016
    - One sexually-transmitted case
    - 18 were pregnant at time of diagnosis
    - 59 were potentially viremic
    - Primarily imported from El Salvador and Guatemala
    - 16 imported cases in San Diego County and 22 imported cases in Los Angeles County
  - Zika is primarily spread by mosquito bites and also sexually transmitted
  - 80% of people that are infected don't show symptoms
  - There is no vaccine or medicine
  - It can cause birth defects in pregnant women
  - Important to be aware of risks associated with travel to countries with Zika
  - Transmission in California is low because
    - Patchy distribution of vector
    - Good vector control
  - Transmission is still possible, however due to potentially viremic individuals
  - Steps to should be taken to avoid standing water, being bitten by mosquitoes after coming back from travelling, etc.



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- Health care providers also play a role in monitoring pregnant women for risk of Zika
- CDPH is constantly issuing health advisories and press releases to inform the public about Zika data and prevention tips
- CDPH is also in constant communication with local health departments and engage in information sharing on up-to-date news from the CDC
- CDPH is also working with local health departments on tracking new and existing cases
- Dr. Iniguez-Stevens mentioned that her office is part of the Binational Technical Work Group which meets on a monthly basis and is comprised of CDC and state representatives from each of the border states as well as the General Directorate of Epidemiology in Mexico City
  - Goal of group is to exchange information and stay on top of any potential outbreaks and cases
- Dr. Iniguez-Stevens also mentioned working with the Institute for the Services of Public Health in Baja California
  - Quarterly meetings are held with the purpose of enhancing communication and coordination
- Dr. Iniguez-Stevens concluded by mentioning the many resources available on the CDPH website

## Questions and Comments from Council members:

Chair Rodriguez wanted clarification on how long Zika stays in a person's system. Dr. Iniguez-Stevens was unsure of the exact lifespan, and said researchers are still looking into the question. However, a person can be viremic and pass on the virus to another mosquito for about a week. If a woman is pregnant and their partner travels to a country with Zika, it is advised they abstain for sexual activity or use protection as the virus is known to stay in semen longer than the blood.

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Chair Rodriguez also wanted clarification on whether or not imported cases in California has resulted in vectors or mosquitoes carrying the virus in the state. Dr. Iniguez-Stevens stated that California does have the vector, but no reported cases of infected mosquitoes.

Assistant Secretary De Alba wanted to know how one would get tested to find out if they had Zika, how they would go about doing it. Dr. Iniguez-Stevens stated that you would have to start with your provider. All of the testing is currently done through CDPH laboratories. There are no private labs testing for Zika currently, so the provider would need to send in a request through the local health department for a test.

#### **XIV. Update on Federal Activities at the Border**

Hector Aguirre, Director of the Border Liaison Office in San Diego for the United States Environmental Protection Agency began by acknowledging the counterparts from Mexico supporting the Council. Director Aguirre acknowledged officials from SEMARNAT, SPA and Civil Protection.

Director Aguirre wanted to mention the election coming up in the fall and mentioned that his office will be putting together a transition team to help showcase opportunities for success both in the past and going forward.

Director Aguirre also mentioned that his office will be preparing for Fiscal Year 2017 project solicitations and will be working with the Council to identify priorities and actions prior to next year's Council meeting, which will be an opportunity to provide an update on solicitations.

Director Aguirre then went on to provide an update on Federal activities as they relate to the Border 2020 Program.

- With respect to air pollution since the last Council meeting
  - There was a very successful meeting on May 31 at the Consulate in Tijuana, which had the support of the Air Board, local air districts,

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- Caltrans, SEMARNAT, SPA, and the Mexican National Institute for Ecology and Climate Change
  - Focused on headway made on monitoring of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the valley, at ports of entry and windblown dust from the Salton Sea
  - At the end of the year, there will be a media campaign to educate the public about reducing particular matter in the air.
- With respect to water
  - There has been progress on infrastructure projects in Niland and Holtville, California
  - There has been lots of support from the Regional Board as they work to help get these two communities into compliance with the Clean Water Act
  - In addition, there is a project being implemented with CONAGUA to reduce raw sewage spills from the Tijuana River that effect the estuary on the U.S. side
  - With Director Angel's help, the wastewater infrastructure diagnostic in Mexicali is nearly complete and will help identify key improvements needed on the Mexican side of the border that will help to protect New River water quality
  - Headway has been on the Tijuana River Watershed in looking at a sediment model for the sub-basin of the watershed, which will be completed next year
  - There is also work on a green infrastructure project for Rio Alamar and new projects that will continue to look at solid waste and trash issues impacting the U.S. side
  - Important meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup> with the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Task Force Meeting
- With respect to the promotion of sustainable materials management and clean sites
  - The Sonoran Institute's presentation highlighted Phase 2 of an effort that began in 2015; Phase 1 had cleanups of some drains, but Phase 2,

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- with the support of CalRecycle and adding the environmental education component is something to be very excited about
- The Ocean Friendly Restaurant project is an outreach effort focused on restaurants and how they can use more environmentally sustainable products; 80% of the restaurants surveyed mentioned the desire of management and customers towards this sustainability shift
  - All of the experience that California had had with regards to e-waste is being used in a pilot project in Mexicali with the aid of CalRecycle; a draft final market analysis is completed and will lead into the design of a program and implementation
  - A compost pilot project in Tijuana in collaboration with COLEF University found that homes in Echo Park were interested in composting and efforts are underway to build capacity and looking at ways to upscale composting efforts
  - Sustainable Materials Management forum is being planned in collaboration in CalRecycle in early 2017
  - With respect to enhancing joint preparedness for environmental response
    - Several border-wide efforts
    - Web-based emergency operations center pilot project in Arizona-Sonora region; this will come to California-Baja California region next year
    - Hazmat Technician refresher course training will take place next week in Mexicali at the Customs Office; in September there will be another training in Tijuana
    - Policy issues with cross-border emergency response include liability (crossing border) and radio interoperability; there has been continued work with Customs to resolve some of these issues
    - There has been success with updating sister city plans and how responders will communicate and work together; San Diego's was updated 2 years ago; next update will be the Imperial Valley-Mexicali sister plan but help will be needed from possibly Cal OES

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- With respect to enhancing compliance assurance and environmental stewardship
  - Access to public information is information
  - Toxic release inventory fact sheets will become available to both sides of border; currently in data collection phase
  - Hazardous waste export-import final rule takes effect December 2016 and make available the electronic submittal of import-export manifests; will enhance tracking capability
- With respect to promoting environmental health
  - U.S. EPA extended its partnership with the Border Health Commission, making a commitment to work on border health issues
  - A pilot project is underway to hold 10 asthma forums in the Imperial Valley; there was 1 in March and 1 in April reaching 35 and 14 low-income families, respectively
  - Bi-national symposium will be held on September 27<sup>th</sup> in Mexicali in collaboration with the CDPH Office of Bi-National Border Health

## Questions and Comments from Council members:

Chair Rodriquez mentioned the good working relationship California has had with U.S. EPA over the years and hopes it will continue even with the transition.

Chair Rodriquez also mentioned the importance of the work being done by U.S. EPA at the border as it relates to air monitoring and data collection. This data will be helpful as CalEnviroScreen, a tool to identify disadvantaged communities in California, is updated late this year or early next year.

Assistant Secretary De Alba mentioned transportation related work with the Federal government, particularly the Otay Mesa East project, which the U.S. Department of Transportation is ready to award the San Diego Association of Governments and Caltrans with a \$49 million grant to continue to build the project. This segment 2 of 3, which is a 4-lane highway to the border, with only the construction of the port itself remaining.

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## XV. Update from SEMARNAT

Alfonso Blancafort, Director for SEMARNAT in Baja California gave an update on the 4 priority topics of the MOU between the Federal Government and California.

- Air Quality Technical Group
  - Funded by Federal resources working closing with state government to contribute those resources for implementation
  - SPA presented action plan to reactivate monitoring stations
  - 2 years study to measure PM<sub>2.5</sub> in Mexicali in collaboration with Baja California state agencies and ARB; when the study is finished, the equipment will be donated to Baja California
  - 2 year training program was developed by INECC, state environmental agency from Baja California, ARB and the San Diego Air Pollution Control District
  - INEC is developing a procedure to audit the monitoring networks through mobile units in Baja California
- Clean Transportation Technical Group
  - There was an experience exchange workshop on April 8 and 9<sup>th</sup> in Mexico City
  - The development of a vehicles inspections guide according to the OBD system was finished and under ARB review
  - Work has been finalized on the environmental criteria for the importation of used vehicles and is also under technical review by ARB
- Climate Change Technical Group
  - California has been sharing information with Mexico about its emissions inventory and Mexico has in turn shared information with California about their general climate change regulations and national emissions registry
  - A workshop for information exchange was held in Mexico City in February 2016
  - Two additional workshops are planned with NGOs including The Nature Conservancy and Environmental Defense Fund on carbon pricing and the

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- development of a cap and trade program in Mexico while taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a law, regulation or standards around such a system
- Forrest Fires Technical Working Group
    - A training workshop was held in Riverside in April 2016 with Mexican officials from CONAFOR, state environmental agency and some municipal firefighters from Baja California

Director Blancafort closed by saying that Secretary Pacchiano was committed to assisting with any of the tasks at hand and will continue to work with both the Federal and State agencies across the border on the goals of the MOU.

## **XVI. Update from SPA in Baja California**

Saul Guzman, Director of Environmental Management for SPA in Baja California gave an update on some points relevant to the activities being undertaken by the government of Baja California.

- Saul Guzman thanked California for its donation of air monitoring equipment, which was recently imported and has already been installed and is being used in Baja California. Saul mentioned that Baja California is also receiving support from Mexico's Federal Government, particularly from SEMARNAT. SPA began changing out its equipment last year because the air quality monitoring equipment has not been operating at 100 percent over the last three or four years due to the age of the equipment components, some dating back to 1995 or 1996. Saul noted that with these new acquisitions of air monitoring equipment, Baja California will be able to restructure its measurement of pollutants within two months. As a result, Baja California will have a more realistic measurement that will allow for a better understanding of the sources of pollution. SPA will thus be able to communicate to the public about the health risks of the pollution.
- Saul acknowledged and thanked California for the support it has provided SPA for many years, including the training it received in March of this year. Collaboration occurs on how to operate monitoring stations and how to validate

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the information, which will help in the design of a Mexican air quality standard. A standard is currently being developed for an Air Quality Index, as well as some proposals being made to change the existing colors and communication codes. Saul mentioned that SPA is trying to keep these codes or AQI as they are because they have allowed us to conduct joint campaigns in the border region.

- Saul also noted that the issue of waste tires is an iconic one for California and Baja California. Because they share a common border and have asymmetric economies, there is demand for the products in Baja California. It is widely recognized that the generator of the tires should contribute to their proper management. California has already made some efforts in this regard, but we need to develop a model to close the cyclical flow of tires. The state of Baja California has established temporary storage facilities for waste tires, but tire importers are demanding that SPA properly handle the tires. In the last couple of years, 600K tires have been disposed of at cement kilns in Rosarito and Ensenada. There is an urgency to develop a market for tire material to help close the loop so as not to warehouse these tires. Around 50 to 60 percent of tires are being collected today. Hopefully with the help of CalRecycle and other institutions Baja California can establish a model that can kick-off this dynamic. It's less costly to shred and cut in tires in Mexico, and there is a demand in the United States for this product; therefore, perhaps part of the processed material can return to be sold in the United States.
- One of the main tasks of SPA is to enforce regulations; SPA regulates air emissions, wastewater discharges, and waste. Lastly, Saul mentioned that Baja California has had a state climate action plan since 2012. Phase 1 of the plan focused on policies for mitigation and adaptation. Reports were provided in San Francisco about a month ago and there are many interesting efforts. Baja California is preparing to create the State Council of Climate Change with all sectors identified, which will begin its activities in 2017. SPA will begin their first activities on registering and reporting actions. Saul noted that it is urgent to understand and act on the issue of climate change, especially in a region where economic activity is very vigorous and sensitive and where environmental and climate change issues are very sensitive as well.



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- Saul expressed appreciation for the collaboration and support from California.

## **XVII. Future Meetings**

Assistant Secretary Rodarte stated that there isn't a date confirmed for the next meeting. There have been 3 so far in 2016 and the Council is required to have at least 2 per year. The plan is to schedule something in early January in the San Diego region. A request will be sent out within the week.

Chair Rodriquez mentioned that Council members should let Assistant Secretary Rodarte know if there are topics they would like to discuss at future meetings.

## **XVIII. Public Comments**

Chris Helmer, with the City of Imperial Beach wanted to make the Council aware of the persistent water quality problems being faced in the Tijuana River Valley region.

- In 2015, there were 233 beach closures at the mouth of the Tijuana River in Imperial Beach
- Important and significant efforts have been going on with the Tijuana River Recovery Team with increased bi-national collaboration that have occurred through the Recovery Team in addition to the efforts of the International Boundary and Water Commission Treaty Minute 320
- The 5-year action plan of the Recovery Team is a significant accomplishment during the past year dating back to 2015
- Mr. Helmer urged the Council to think about potential opportunities for funding sources just for the Tijuana River Watershed

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM by Chairman Rodriquez.**