Environmental Health in the United States - Mexico Border and U.S. - Mexico Border Health Commission Priorities

Environmental Health Work Group and Border Indicators Task Force Meeting

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Background

Border people and environmental health problems

✓ 13 million people reside in the U.S. – Mexico border;

✓ 14 pairs of independent sister cities contain 90% of the border population;

✓ These geographic-socioeconomic units share natural resources like water and air; and

✓ Disproportion poverty and disease.
Consequences of United States – Mexico Border Region Growth

- Greater demand for water, land, and energy;
- Increase with the use of fuel;
- Increased waste generation;
- Increase with the release of environmental pollutants; and
- Establishment of population settlements lacking essential public services.
Health Impact of Region Growth

Excess burden of environmental health problems

- Water-borne diseases;
- Respiratory problems; and
- Other health effects from excessive exposure to toxic substances such as pesticides and lead.
Border Binational Efforts to Respond to Environmental Challenges

La Paz Agreement 1983

Integrated Border Environmental Plan for US-Mexico Border Area (IBEP) - 1992

Border XXI

Border 2012

National Coordinators

EPA
SEMARNAT

Regional Workgroups
California-Baja California
Arizona-Sonora
New Mexico-Texas-Chihuahua
Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas

Border-wide Workgroups
Environmental Health
Emergency Preparedness and Response
Cooperative Enforcement and Compliance

Policy Forums
Air
Water
Hazardous and Solid Waste
### Border Binational Efforts to Respond to Environmental Challenges

**Colonias Infrastructure Project Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Project Phase</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
<th>Construction Commitment ($M)</th>
<th>Number of Colonias</th>
<th>Population Benefitting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>104,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under Construction</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>67,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>76,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>559</strong></td>
<td><strong>863</strong></td>
<td><strong>247,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5,670</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under Construction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,150</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,680</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.56</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These appropriations include funds from EPA, NADBk, and TWDB.
Commission's History

- 1988-1994: Intense border, States, and American Medical Association advocacy and legislative efforts;
- 1994: Commission has its origins in Public Law 103-400. Authorized the President to enter into an agreement with Mexico;
- July 2000: Signing of the International Agreement creates the Commission; and
- November 2000: Commission held its 1st Binational Meeting.
Purpose

✓ To identify and evaluate current and future health problems affecting the population in the United States-Mexico border area.

✓ To encourage and facilitate actions to address these problems.

Goals

✓ To institutionalize a domestic focus on border health which would transcend political changes

✓ To create an effective venue for binational discussion to address public health issues and problems
Roles

✓ Promote social and community participation;
✓ Act as a catalyst for needed change;
✓ Act as a policy advocate;
✓ Increase resources for the border;
✓ Encourage self-responsibility for health; and
✓ Facilitate Border Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance Project
Composition and Structure

- Two nations
- Ten border states
- 44 counties and 80 municipalities
- 14 pairs of sister cities
- Public International Organization
- United States and Mexico Sections
- 26 Commission Members and three standing committees
- U.S. Inter Agency Border Action Team
Commission Outreach Offices (OROs)
The Environmental Health Education Model was designed to give Doña Ana County residents an opportunity to have their homes checked for environmental and safety hazards.

To download a copy, please visit www.borderhealth.org
Success Stories
Our Program

HEALTHY BORDER 2010

AN AGENDA FOR IMPROVING HEALTH ON THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER

OCTOBER 2003

To download a copy, please visit us at www.borderhealth.org
Healthy Border 2010 Program
Goals and Strategies

**Overarching Goals**

1. Improve the quality and increase the years of healthy life
2. Eliminate health disparities

**Environmental Health Program Goals**

- **Environmental Health**
  - Improve household access to sewage disposal
  - Reduce hospital admissions for acute pesticide poisoning

- **Respiratory Diseases**
  - Reduce the rate of hospitalization for asthma
USMBHC Environmental Health
Priorities and Strategies

Some Reflections

✓ Life expectancy in the United States has increased 40 years;
✓ 33 of the 40 added years are due to improved prevention and environmental conditions;
✓ Increased concentration of Hispanic / Latino descendant populations; and
✓ Healthy communities design.
**Increased access to information on:**

- Health events: asthma and acute pesticide hospitalizations
- Health determinants: number of households not connected to sewage systems, environmental indicators of air and water quality
- Effective interventions to promote healthy communities
- Local successful experiences and programs
- Resources and funding opportunities

**Increased collaboration and coordination to:**

- Promote awareness
- Share and increase use of regional and local resources / capacity
- Leverage resources and expertise

**Challenges:**

- Information and resources are most needed at the local and regional levels
Information Sharing at All Levels
Commission’s Mapping Service

Figure 10. Map with legend showing visible layers and low to high value ranges for infant mortality rates. In general, darker colors represent larger values, and vice versa.
Alliance

The EHWG could serve as the lead technician group to achieve Healthy Border 2010 environmental health goals

Examples of Benefits for the Commission

✓ Provide ready access to EHWG network of partners with attendant expertise and training and often, already ongoing programs.

✓ Collaborate with the border-wide workgroup that bridges the environmental and health agencies in facilitating collaborations, data sharing and joint problem solving

✓ Leverage resources
Alliance

The EHWG could serve as the lead technician group to achieve Healthy Border 2010 environmental health goals

**Examples of Benefits for the EHWG**

- Greatly strengthen role / visibility of health in Border 2012 Program
- Places environmental health in broader context of public health
- Facilitates representation of health officials at regional meetings
- Enhances likelihood of true binational partnering and participation
- Leverage resources and expertise
“Our challenge is to have a border, a world of order, characterized by peace and prosperity in the midst of diversity.”
Thank you for all that you do –
Gracias por todo lo que hacen

For more information:

www.borderhealth.org
www.saludfronteriza.org