

BORDERS COMMITTEE

September 20, 2002

AGENDA REPORT NO.: **2**

Action Requested: APPROVE

MEETING SUMMARY OF AUGUST 7, 2002

The August 7, 2002 meeting of the Borders Committee was called to order by Chair Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal). Committee members in attendance were Hal Martin (North County Inland) and Greg Cox (County of San Diego), and alternates Judy Ritter (North County Inland), Phil Monroe (South County), and Dick Ramos (East County). Ex-Officio members in attendance were Thomas Buckley (County of Riverside), Larry Grogan (County of Imperial), Rodolfo Figueroa (Republic of Mexico), and Pedro Orso-Delgado (Caltrans).

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Crystal Crawford welcomed the Committee members and guests to the meeting. Mr. Andy Horne from the Imperial Irrigation District, Mr. Hank Kuiper, Imperial County Supervisor and Chair of the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG), and Mr. Wally Leimgruber, Imperial County Supervisor, were introduced as special guests.

2. MEETING SUMMARY OF JUNE 21, 2002

There were no changes to the June 21, 2002 meeting actions.

3. COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO) REPORT

Ms. Saxod, COBRO Chair, provided the Committee with an overview of the July 19, 2002 COBRO Summer Conference that had over 200 attendees. The keynote speaker, Ambassador Jeffrey Davidow, emphasized that in order to improve border infrastructure, elected local officials must get the attention of the federal government. At the September Borders Committee meeting, COBRO will forward recommendations from the conference.

Ms. Saxod also mentioned that the Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Conference will be held in San Diego in October. COBRO supported Consul General Figueroa's request to promote the official recognition of the Consular identification cards by local jurisdictions in San Diego County.

4. CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBER'S REPORT

Councilmember Patricia McCoy was appointed by the Chair of SANDAG as new Vice Chair of the Borders Committee.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Hon. Mitch Beauchamp, Councilmember from National City and member of the Metropolitan Transit Development Board, commented on the need to reopen the desert rail line to Imperial Valley. It would improve freight shipments and enhance coordination with Tijuana's public transportation services to increase trolley ridership.

Ms. Kristen Allioti introduced Mr. Howard Shatz from the Public Policy Institute of California who is researching U.S./Mexico economic integration resulting from NAFTA. She also introduced Mr. Jose Flores Bringas, staff for Hon. Nicolas Osuna Aguilaoscho, a legislator from Tecate who is President of the Committee on Border Affairs in Baja California.

6. PROPOSED I-15 INTERREGIONAL PARTNERSHIP (IRP)

Jeff Martin, SANDAG Staff, reviewed the monthly status report for the IRP short-term transportation strategies. The Committee approved the short-term strategies to forward to the Transportation Committee for inclusion in the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.

7. SAN DIEGO-IMPERIAL VALLEY WATER TRANSFER

Mr. Bob Campbell, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), made a presentation on the proposed water transfer from the Imperial Irrigation District to the SDCWA, which would be the largest agriculture to urban water transfer ever attempted in California. Mr. Campbell outlined several remaining challenges: environmental issues from water diversions that affect habitat; whether the water transfer is growth inducing in San Diego County; and the impacts on the Salton Sea as a result of accelerating the salinity level. He stated that the deadline for the approval of the transfer is December 2002.

Mr. Andy Horne, Imperial Irrigation District (IID), emphasized the importance of exploring reciprocal cooperation on transborder issues. He believes that short-term solutions are not the answer to long term infrastructure and supply problems. Mr. Horne agreed with Mr. Campbell that time is of the essence; however, the current proposal is unacceptable to the IID. On August 6th, IID sent a letter to Gov. Davis offering to explore an interim fallowing program for five years. Mr. Horne stated that solutions to future water supplies need to be evaluated and that agriculture to urban water transfers should not be the "cure all", given the high economic and social costs. For example, desalinization of ocean water may ultimately be more feasible with the implementation of federal subsidies. He stated that Southern Californians should minimize water uses for landscaping and that land use planning must coincide with the available water supply. He welcomes mutually beneficial and constructive solutions to this challenging issue.

Special guests Imperial County Supervisors Hank Kuiper and Wally Leimgruber were asked to provide additional insight on the water transfer. They highlighted concerns regarding the economic impacts of fallowing to citizens in the Imperial Valley. Imperial County recognizes the importance of economic development and diversification and welcomes new opportunities for investment. San Diego County Supervisor Greg Cox reiterated that it is necessary to find common ground and keep the dialogue open to solve this issue. Mayor Larry Grogan expressed his trepidation about San Diego's lack of willingness to make commitments that would enable an acceptable agreement. Mr. Grogan stated that now is the time for crisis management because only a few months remain before the December 31, 2002 water transfer agreement deadline.

Gary Gallegos, Executive Director of SANDAG, said that the discussion is broader than water. It also is about equity, economic development and the need for partnership between San Diego County and Imperial County. Chair Crystal Crawford, invited representatives from Imperial and San Diego counties and any other water agencies to offer suggestions and next steps for the Borders Committee. Ms. Crawford mentioned that this meeting was a starting point and she would welcome additional meetings with Imperial County.

8. ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Friday, September 20, 2002.

9. ATTENDANCE

Attendance list available upon request.