COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) may take action on any item appearing on this agenda.

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

SANDAG, 7th Floor Conference Room
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101-4231

Staff Contact: Hector Vanegas
(619) 699-1972
hva@sandag.org

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

• FOLLOW UP TO THE APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2009 BINATIONAL SEMINAR “CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSSBORDER CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATION” AND UPCOMING 2010 BINATIONAL SEMINAR

• PERSPECTIVES ON WATER USAGE ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

• CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER REGION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) will advise the Borders Committee of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) concerning both short- and long-term binational related activities, issues, and actions; provide input regarding binational border-related planning and development; and identify ways to assist and coordinate with existing efforts in the binational area. The COBRO will serve as a working group to the SANDAG Borders Committee to facilitate a better understanding of the binational border-related issues and needs of the California-Baja California region.
Welcome to SANDAG! Members of the public may speak to the COBRO on any item at the time that the Committee is considering the item. Please complete a Speaker’s Slip which is located in the rear of the room and then present the slip to Committee staff. Also, members of the public are invited to address the Committee on any issue under the agenda item entitled Public Comments/Communications. Speakers are limited to three minutes. The COBRO may take action on any item appearing on the agenda.

This agenda and related staff reports can be accessed at www.sandag.org under meetings on SANDAG’s Web site. Public comments regarding the agenda can be forwarded to SANDAG via the e-mail comment form also available on the Web site. E-mail comments should be received no later than noon, two days prior to the COBRO meeting.

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ITEM #

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

+2. COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES MEETING SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

Summary of the September 1, 2009, meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER COMMENTS

Each speaker is limited to three minutes.

CONSENT (Item #4)

+4. UPCOMING EVENTS

INFORMATION

REPORTS (#5 through #7)

+5 FOLLOW UP TO THE APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2009 BINATIONAL SEMINAR “CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSSBORDER CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATION” AND UPCOMING 2010 BINATIONAL SEMINAR (Chair Paul Ganster and Hector Vanegas, SANDAG)

The recommendations from the 2009 Binational Seminar were approved by the Board of Directors on October 23, 2009. As COBRO is tasked with supporting the organization of the 2010 Binational Seminar, it should provide feedback to staff initiate its preparation.

6. PERSPECTIVES ON WATER USAGE ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IN BAJA CALIFORNIA (Alberto Pombo, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte)

This report will present the Mexican perspective on the future impacts that climate change will have on water usage and availability in Baja California.
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<td><strong>CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER REGION</strong> (Gabriela Muñoz, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte)</td>
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This report will present a perspective on how the causes and effects of climate change could become an issue along the U.S.-Mexico border, and also will present possible recommendations.

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<th><strong>NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION</strong></th>
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The next meeting of the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2010, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m., at SANDAG.

+ next to an item indicates an attachment
COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
MEETING SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The September 1, 2009, Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) meeting was called to order by Past Chair Elsa Saxod. The meeting was held at San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Members present were: Past Chair Elsa Saxod, SAXOD Enterprises/San Diego County Water Authority; Lydia Antonio, Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego; Efrain Ibarra, South San Diego County Economic Development Council; Miguel Tapia, City of Chula Vista; Denice Garcia, City of San Diego; Gary Brown, City of Imperial Beach; William Yu, City of Tijuana; John Riley and Arturo Montfort, Desarrollo Económico e Industrial de Tijuana (DEITAC); Gabriela Muñoz and Tito Alegría, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF); Plinio Herrera, Universidad Iberoamericana Tijuana (UIA); Rebecca Torra, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce; Nathan Owens, San Diego Dialogue; James Clark and Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce; Thomas Currie and Jason M-B Wells, San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce; and Clay Phillips, Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Advisory members present were: Kirk Lanz, Border Trade Alliance (BTA).

SANDAG staff present were: Hector Vanegas, Ron Saenz, Julia Coleman and Jeff Wheeland.

2. MEETING SUMMARY

Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, entertained a motion to approve the July 7, 2009, meeting summary. Gabriela Muñoz, COLEF, seconded the motion. The meeting summary was approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER COMMENTS

Lydia Antonio, Consul General of Mexico in San Diego, commented on the Mexican government’s promotion of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT in Spanish) 2009 award for conservation projects. She handed out a flyer to explain the contest.

Gabriela Muñoz, COLEF, announced that her institution, along with the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC, in Spanish) and the Environmental Protection Agency in Baja California (SPA, in Spanish) are organizing the
development of the State of Baja California’s Climate Action plan. A workshop will be held in Mexicali at the UABC campus on September 24 – 25, 2009.

James Clark, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, announced the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce’s annual trip to Washington D.C. will be September 20 – 23, 2009, to meet with administration and congressional officials to discuss border issues. It is the complement to the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce’s trip to Mexico City in April 2009. Also, in the first week of October, the Chamber will take a similar trip to Vancouver, Canada, to explore possibilities to work jointly with the City of Vancouver.

Kirk Lanz, BTA, announced that Maria Luisa O’Connell, President of BTA, was appointed by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano to be the Assistant Commissioner of Public Affairs. The BTA is currently looking for potential candidates to fill her position.

4. UPCOMING EVENTS

A list of upcoming binational events was provided by SANDAG staff and is included in the meeting’s agenda packet.

5. SANDAG’S 2009 BINATIONAL SEMINAR “CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSSBORDER CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATION” TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, presented the findings from the 2009 Binational Seminar Task Force that was formed at the July 7, 2009, COBRO meeting. The Task Force met on Tuesday, August 4, 2009, and was comprised of Chair Paul Ganster; Lydia Antonio, Consulate General of Mexico; Amy Radetsky, Consulate General of the United States; Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce; Gary Brown, City of Imperial Beach; Christina Luhn, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation; Gabriela Muñoz, COLEF; and SANDAG staff.

Angelika Villagrana stated that the 2009 Binational Seminar was extremely important in addressing the effects of climate change and what our border region can do to mitigate this problem. It has become a hot-button issue in not only the San Diego-Baja California region, but throughout the United States and Mexico.

The recommendations from the Task Force were:

1. Encourage all levels of agencies and stakeholders in our San Diego-Baja California region to mutually agree on priority aspects of climate change collaboration, including mitigation, adaptation, and education strategies.

2. Encourage the inclusion of strategies for collaboration and information sharing on regional climate change action plans in San Diego and Baja California.

3. The Fiscal Year 2010 binational event should follow up on topics related to climate change planning.

4. In Fiscal Year 2010, produce a progress report on developments and actions taken in climate change planning as a result of the 2009 Binational Seminar recommendations.
Elsa Saxod, SAXOD Enterprises/San Diego County Water Authority, questioned whether the wording of recommendations 1 and 2 were not powerful enough. She believes the word “encourage” should be more forceful so as to demonstrate the importance of the issue.

Hector Vanegas, SANDAG, commented that when the Task Force met the previous month, this was one of the discussions that occurred. The third and fourth recommendations were meant to be more action-oriented items, while the first two were included to bring together support for the strategies by local climate change plans that were already underway.

John Riley, DEITAC, stated that it is crucial to involve the private sector to spur climate change action by the government. He commented that there was a large private sector turnout at a recent green conference that was held at University of California, San Diego.

Hector Vanegas stated that one of the Task Force recommendations was to follow up with another binational seminar specifically related to climate change. Potentially, the private sector and climate change issues could be one of the topics, but it is too early for COBRO to decide this theme.

Gabriela Muñoz, COLEF, commented that the public is not aware of the potential effects of climate change. The inclusion of the private sector would help increase awareness through programs such as carbon trading.

Acting Chair Elsa Saxod then called for a vote to approve the recommendations. A motion was made by Gary Brown, City of Imperial Beach. It was seconded by Gabriela Muñoz. The motion was unanimously approved.

With the approval of these recommendations by COBRO, they will be forwarded onto the Borders Committee at their next meeting on September 25, 2009.

6. 2008 SAN DIEGO-BAJA CALIFORNIA BORDER CROSSING STATISTICS

Jeff Wheeland, SANDAG, presented the northbound border crossing statistics from the San Diego-Baja California ports of entry (POEs) from 1997 to 2008. Data was gathered from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), based on data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The first POE summarized was San Ysidro-Puerta México. Total passenger vehicle crossings at this POE increased 33.4 percent from 1997 to 2004, while from 2004 to 2008 these numbers declined by 22.4 percent. Bus crossings decreased overall by 9 percent from 1997 to 2008. Total individual crossings, which include pedestrians and total passengers in private vehicles and buses, increased 31 percent from 1997 to 2003, but decreased 31 percent from 2003 to 2008. Total passengers in private vehicles and buses increased 35 percent from 1997 to 2003, but declined 35 percent from 2003 to 2008. Pedestrian crossings peaked in 2001, declined slightly, then increased again in 2003; however, from 2004 to 2008, these crossings decreased by 22.9 percent.
The second POE summarized was Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay. Total vehicle crossings at this POE, (which include private vehicles, buses, and trucks) increased 54 percent from 1997 to 2005, but from 2005 to 2008 these numbers declined by 25.1 percent. This was also the case with private vehicles, which dropped by 15 percent and 18 percent in 2006 and 2007, respectively. However, in 2008 both total crossings and private vehicle crossings increased. On the contrary, truck crossings at this POE have steadily increased 36.9 percent from 1997 to 2008. Total individual crossings increased 35 percent (5 million crossings) from 1997 to 2005, but decreased 26.1 percent (3.7 million) from 2005 to 2008. Total passengers in private vehicles and buses declined 31 percent from 2005 to 2008. Pedestrian crossings at this POE have dramatically increased overall from 1997 to 2008 by 180 percent.

The third San Diego-Baja California POE summarized was Tecate. Total vehicle crossings at this POE increased 21 percent from 1997 to 2003; but these numbers declined by 27.9 percent from 2003 to 2008. Overall from 1997 to 2008, total vehicle crossings have declined by 12 percent. Similar to Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay, truck crossings at this POE have increased 12.4 percent from 1997 to 2008. Total individual crossings decreased from 3.4 million crossings to 2.4 million from 1997 to 2008, a decrease of 30 percent. From 2003 to 2008, total individual crossings declined 26 percent. Total passengers in private vehicles and buses declined 40 percent from 2005 to 2008. Pedestrian crossings at this POE have increased from 1997 to 2008 by 70 percent.

Hector Vanegas, SANDAG, noted that this presentation and statistics will be posted to the SANDAG Web site for future consultation.

Kirk Lanz, BTA, commented that it would be useful for a timeline with significant events listed along with the charts of border crossing statistics. It could show what issues were responsible for influencing border statistics.

Hector Vanegas noted that this report was created to solely reflect the numbers of border crossings without placing causation from outside circumstances. SANDAG is currently working on the Economic Impacts of Border Wait Times study, which will further evaluate the causes of waits at the border.

Jason M-B Wells, San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, stated that this graph of border crossing statistics, alongside a graph of border wait times, would help dispel the claim that although border wait times have decreased recently, it is due to fewer numbers of crossings than anything else.

Tito Alegría, COLEF, stated that it would be interesting to perform another round of surveys to see what border crossers intentions for using the POEs. It could help detail the reasons for changes in wait times.

Nathan Owens, San Diego Dialogue, stated that the information from 2004 and 2005 are interesting because border crossings were declining before the economic crisis had begun. He also noted that it is interesting that truck numbers have increased continuously despite poor economic conditions.
7. PRESENTATION ON PROJECT SMART BORDER 2010

James Clark, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, introduced Richard Caldwell, Project Smart Border 2010. Mr. Caldwell presented his project and its goal of easing border wait times in San Diego-Tijuana and Calexico-Mexicali in the short term (two years).

The regional vision of Project Smart Border 2010 is to continue to improve the security, efficiency, and effectiveness at all regional border crossing facilities. This vision is attainable by:

1. Improving approaches and capacity of all SENTRI and FAST lanes
2. Recreating a visible and consistent crossing benefit for Trusted Travelers (reduced queue time) to attract more participants
3. Facilitating increased use of Radio Frequency (RFID) documents (Smart Cards)
4. Reestablishing and supporting effective and efficient “Traffic Management Operational Techniques”

The approach of Project Smart Border 2010 is to assist, coordinate, and support all federal, state, and local border management agencies in their efforts to facilitate legitimate travel and trade by:

1. Supporting improvements in infrastructure and operational practices that increase security, while improving vehicle and pedestrian throughput
2. Ensuring effectiveness, reliability, and efficiency of SENTRI and FAST “Trusted Traveler” Programs
3. Coordinating establishment of additional “Smart Card” application centers in Mexicali, Tecate, and other locations, as appropriate
4. Ensure efficient primary and secondary vehicle processing techniques are consistently utilized
5. Replicate inspection process improvements to other land border ports

The regional strategy of Project Smart Border 2010 involves four issues: commercial cargo, SENTRI Program, general vehicle and pedestrian processing, and outbound crossings.

For commercial cargo, the short term goals are to reduce routine processing times to a 30 minute or less minimum to a 60 minute maximum. This will be achieved by implementing the following short term actions:

1. Acquire ten acre (vacant) site adjacent to the Otay Mesa Cargo Facility
2. Design, fund, and build out new site to accommodate expanded CBP inspection capacity, i.e. hazardous materials, X-ray, and secondary examination staging area
3. Research, test, and implement importer and carrier incentives, based on arrival time of day, designed to avoid peak time crossing delays
4. Expand existing north/south bridge at Calexico East by six lanes for vehicles and trucks

The SENTRI issue will aim to reduce wait times by:

1. Increasing designated SENTRI lanes by redesigning approach gates, bollards, and binational signage to enhance CBP operational flexibility and effectively respond to SENTRI workload
2. Ensuring officer training and operational practices reflect appropriate assessment of risk and efficient traffic management techniques, i.e. reduce primary inspection time
3. Managing routine secondary inspections effectively, efficiently, and timely
4. Coordinating United States and Mexican agencies to develop and implement new SENTRI lanes (23 and 24 - left) at San Ysidro
5. Investigating and implementing use of existing or new webcams in Mexico to provide real time queue information to CBP via dedicated, non-network display terminals (Tijuana and Mexicali)

The general vehicle and pedestrian processing goal is to reduce queue time to 30 minutes or less for routine vehicle crossings and a 15 minute average, with a 30 minute maximum, for routine pedestrian crossings. This will be achieved by implementing the following short term actions:

1. Fully staff and train primary CBP officers to effectively utilize tandem booth equipped lanes
2. Promote expanded use of RFID technology for all crossers by supporting the establishment of additional “Smart Card” application centers in Mexicali, Tecate, and other locations, as appropriate
3. Encourage legislation in California to allow inclusion of RFID technology for holders of California Drivers’ Licenses
4. Encourage placement of electronic signage throughout Tijuana and Mexicali, displaying real-time border crossing information, allowing individuals to make informed crossing decisions

The outbound (southbound/entering Mexico) issue will reduce congestion by:

1. Ensuring that all current and future port reconstruction projects fund and incorporate appropriate CBP outbound inspection facilities
2. Actively coordinating with Mexican Authorities as they implement and operate SIAVE (Mexican southbound border inspections)
3. Jointly determining how to implement SENTRI for southbound traffic to satisfy Mexican requirements as is done with NEXUS for Canada
4. Enhancing CBP officer and public safety as CBP implements random outbound inspections
With the election of a new presidential administration, an opportunity arises to create some beneficial changes that can reduce border wait times:

- Establish a multi-agency task force to develop a methodology for the creation of Public-Private Partnerships to fund and build POEs
- Reengineer and streamline the multi-agency process for obtaining Presidential Permits
- Request border management agencies to allow establishment of toll lanes, offering expedited crossings for trusted travelers at land border ports of entry
- Support legislation allowing RFID technology to be embedded in California Drivers’ Licenses
- Request administration guidance and assistance in providing funding for border cities impacted by port of entry construction or renovation
- Evaluate the effects of U.S. Immigration regulations that require persons with Permanent Residence status to reside in the United States and the resulting detrimental effects on expanding RFID and SENTRI participation
- Establish field level CBP Ombudsman positions to review applicant denials for SENTRI and FAST
- Add Spanish language option for online Trusted Traveler applications (GOES)

8. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The October 2009, COBRO meeting is cancelled. The next COBRO meeting will be held on November 3, 2009, at 3 p.m., at SANDAG.
UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT: Fifth Annual South County Reception
South San Diego County Economic Development Council
WHEN: October 29, 2009, 5 to 7 p.m.
WHERE: Pier 32 Marina
National City, CA
MORE INFO: (619) 424-5143 or www.sandiegosouth.com

WHAT: 20th Border Legislative Conference (BLC) and 2nd Annual Americas 2020 Summit
The Council of State Governments (CSG) - WEST
WHEN: November 4-7, 2009
WHERE: San Antonio, TX
MORE INFO: http://www.borderlegislators.org/joinusXX.html, (916) 553-4423, or mcastaneda@csg.org.

WHAT: Tequila Talk with Amalia García, Governor of the State of Zacatecas, Mexico
Institute of the Americas
WHEN: November 9, 2009, 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.
WHERE: Institute of the Americas, Weaver Conference Center
University of California, San Diego (UCSD) campus
MORE INFO: http://www.iAmericas.org/events/

WHAT: Fifth Annual Inter-American Business Awards
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
WHEN: November 12, 2009, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
WHERE: Hotel Camino Real Tijuana, Tijuana, Baja California
MORE INFO: http://www.sdchamber.org/

WHAT: Tequila Talk with Rommel Moreno Manjarrez, Attorney General of Baja California, Mexico
Institute of the Americas
WHEN: November 12, 2009, 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.
WHERE: Institute of the Americas, Weaver Conference Center
UCSD campus
MORE INFO: http://www.iAmericas.org/events/
**WHAT:** Making Business in Mexico
**WHERE:** Mexicali Industrial Park
**WHEN:** November 12, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
**WHERE:** Sheraton Anaheim Hotel, Anaheim, CA
**MORE INFO:** 1(888) 467-4672 or marketing@pimsa.com.mx

**WHAT:** Transborder Institute at University of San Diego
**WHERE:** Joan B. Kroc Building, University of San Diego
**WHEN:** November 18-20, 2009
**MORE INFO:** http://www.sandiego.edu/peacestudies/tbi/news/events/eventlist.php?_focus=33617

**WHAT:** Institute of the Americas 26th Anniversary Dinner
**WHERE:** Faculty Club, UCSD
**WHEN:** November 19, 2009, 6:30 p.m.
**MORE INFO:** http://www.iamericas.org/

**WHAT:** Membership Showcase Breakfast
**WHERE:** HomeTown Buffet, Otay Mesa, CA
**WHEN:** November 19, 2009, 8:30 a.m.
**MORE INFO:** (619) 661-6111 or www.otaymesa.org

**WHAT:** Critical Issues in Latin America Seminar
**WHERE:** UCSD campus
**WHEN:** November 20, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
**MORE INFO:** http://www.iamericas.org/ioa/events/critical-issues-in-latin-america.html

**WHAT:** Jóvenes Fronterizos/Border Youth: A Research Project on Development of Adolescents Living on the Border
**WHERE:** Raúl Rangel Auditorium, COLEF, Tijuana
**WHEN:** December 4, 2009, 9:30 a.m.
**MORE INFO:** http://www.colef.mx/eventos/evento.asp?Evento=1081

Key Staff Contact: Hector Vanegas, (619) 699-1972, hva@sandag.org
FOLLOW UP TO THE APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
THE 2009 BINATIONAL SEMINAR "CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR CROSSBORDER CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATION" AND
UPCOMING 2010 BINATIONAL SEMINAR

The recommendations from the 2009 Binational Seminar were approved by the Board of Directors on October 23, 2009. As the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) is tasked with supporting the organization of the 2010 Binational Seminar, it should provide feedback to staff and initiate its preparation.

Discussion

The 2009 Binational Seminar gave stakeholders from both sides of the border an opportunity to learn about the latest developments in climate change mitigation and adaptation planning in California and Baja California.

Outcomes from the 2009 Binational Seminar were initially reviewed at the July 24, 2009, Joint Meeting of the Borders Committee, COBRO, and the City of Tijuana, and subsequent discussions were held at the COBRO and the Borders Committee meetings. The following recommendations from the 2009 Binational Seminar were approved by the Board of Directors on October 23, 2009, with the instructions to address them in the implementation of the adopted Overall Work Program (OWP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, and in the formulation of the proposed OWP and budget for FY 2011:

1. Recognize the importance of encouraging all levels of agencies and stakeholders in our San Diego-Baja California region to mutually agree on priority aspects of climate change collaboration, including mitigation, adaptation, and education strategies.

2. Encourage the inclusion of strategies for collaboration and sharing information on regional climate change action plans in San Diego and Baja California.

3. The FY 2010 binational event should follow up on topics related to climate change planning.

4. In FY 2010, produce a progress report on developments and actions taken in climate change planning as a result of the 2009 seminar recommendations.
CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER REGION

This report will present a perspective on how the causes and effects of climate change could become an issue along the U.S.-Mexico border, and also will present possible recommendations.

Attachment: 1. Climate Change issues at the U.S.-Mexico border region, Gabriela Munoz-Melendez, Ph.D. & DIC

Key Staff Contact: Hector Vanegas, (619) 699-1972, hva@sandag.org
1. Title and author name

Climate Change issues at the US-Mexico border region

Gabriela Munoz-Melendez, Ph.D. & DIC

2. Statement of the problem or issue in focus

As global as climate change could be is far from being uniform in both its causes (sources of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions) and effects (degrees of vulnerability and market and non-market costs) across regions; more importantly, these play a symbiotic role in such variation because of their inherent characteristics of economic, social, political and environmental conditions; as well as degrees of dependence on climate-sensitive resources, among other relevant factors.

The border region between Mexico and USA is a dynamic area where the causes and effects of climate change could become an issue in several possible scenarios due to the complex relationships covering multiple aspects; all of them framed in a generalized rapid industrialization. To crown this regional complexity; border communities share physical similarities, such as topography, geomorphology and weather in the shape of deserts, mountain ranges, wetlands, estuaries, air basins and aquifers along 3,141 kilometers from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean.

To such degree climate change could become an issue in the US-Mexico border region that if its GHG emissions of 129 mmt CO₂ eq. are expressed in social carbon costs, this amounts to US$1,548 million estimated aggregated net economic costs of damage from climate change.

3. Critique of current policy options

In Mexico, there is a federal climate change program The National Strategy on Climate Change (“Estrategia Nacional de Cambio Climático”) that regional or State programs on climate change should address. There are few examples of these. At the Northern Border, Baja California and Nuevo Leon are developing their Plans of Climate Action.

In the USA, there is not a federal climate change program; thus, it has been up to regions and States to take actions that directly address greenhouse gases, as well as to cover a wide range of policies, from outlining possible strategies to setting mandatory greenhouse gas emission standards.
Despite this fundamental difference on public policies to address climate change, there is a first exercise on harmonization regarding GHG emissions inventories at the border region; this corresponds to the Climate Change Initiative Arizona Sonora, through this Border States agreed to:

- Collabore to develop a regional GHG emissions inventory in Arizona and Sonora
- Identify jointly opportunities to reduce GHG emissions and sequestrate carbon along their shared border
- Facilitate certifications of Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) projects in Mexico.
- Create an advisory group on climate change in Sonora as a counterpart to the existing in Arizona.

As important as this exercise could be, it must be say that crossborder collaboration is far from joint actions let alone a shared plan of climate action for the border region.

A warning note to take into account is regarding the methodology used to calculate emissions at both sides of the border; this should not be an adoption of the American counting methods by the Mexican side, as Mexico should follow standard protocols under the national compromises to the Kyoto protocol. However, the counting methodology should be flexible enough for both, to take into account the regional context and to allow for natural differences to happen; for example in technology, to mention but one of the most relevant.

4. Policy recommendations

Policies recomendations here listed are taken from the currently proposed scoping strategy recommendations at both sides of the border. In general, these verse on:

- Improving, expanding and strengthening existing energy efficiency (transmission, distribution and use) programs
- Increasing the supply and use of renewable energy
- Improving vehicle fuel efficiency

In particular, the reduction targets differ widely not only between Mexico and the USA, but among American states themselves. And although it should be recognised that the idea of a common regional target is not feasible, it should be considered that a range of reduction targets per region and sector may be possible through the implementation of a progressive decoupling of increased emissions from economic growth in the border region.
The means to reach such range of reduction targets could arise from tools proposed such as: a cap-and-trade program and targeted fees in California, carbon sequestration through new policies and practices in the Agriculture and Forestry sectors in Arizona, on the American Side. In Mexico, by the other hand, GHG emissions mitigation opportunities are identified in two major areas: A) Energy Generation and Use, and B) Vegetation and Land Use, with installation of Cogeneration or CHP (Combined Heat and Power) plants for the former, and increasing the coverage of Protected Areas by 500,000 hectares per year to accumulate 3 million hectares in the National Protected Areas System, for the latter.

5. Conclusions / Final comments

The decisions make today about infrastructure, health, water management, agriculture, biodiversity and housing will have lasting consequences. It is therefore important to begin planning now for the impacts of climate change in the future. Such planning should include a combination of mitigation and adaptation measures as well as technological development, research, public policy making and individual citizens' participation across regions and nations.

Coordination is meant to play a vital role in crossborder collaboration to work efficiently on mutual benefit and not to duplicate efforts. To do so, initiatives should start to a manageable level, from a municipal/city level and work jointly to reach a State level, then integrate regions and finally address the whole border.

Funding will be needed to encourage the implementation of joint plans; this could come from the already existing financial institutions dedicated to support environmental projects, such as the North American Development Bank (NADB). A second source of funding could be a regional cap-and-trade mechanism, is should be stressed that this should go further than trade itself and include sufficient insight into the social, political and/or ecological context of the border region.

Finally, it should be considered that any Climate Initiative in the border region will face obstacles; on the policy side there are needs of much more coordination. On the technical side the professional cultures are actually quite different, as are the economic/finance contexts. Despite of all these differences the fact that we, border citizens, are sharing a region under threatening of climate change impacts, should lead us to figure out how to work on this issue in an integrated way.

6. References


EPA, 2009b. Inventarios y políticas de gases de efecto invernadero en la región fronteriza entre los Estados Unidos y Mexico (borrador). U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.