

San Diego Association of Governments

BORDERS COMMITTEE

May 21, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1**

Action Requested: APPROVE

BORDERS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

Meeting of April 16, 2004

The regularly scheduled meeting of the San Diego Association of Governments Borders Committee was called to order at 12:36 p.m. by Chair Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal). Other members in attendance were Patricia McCoy (South County), Ed Gallo (North County Inland), David Allan (East County), Ralph Inzunza (City of San Diego), Victor Carrillo (Imperial County), and alternates David Powell (North County Coastal), Phil Monroe (South County), and Pam Slater (County of San Diego). Ex-officio members in attendance were Thomas Buckley (Riverside County), Javier Diaz (Republic of Mexico), James Bond (San Diego County Water Authority), Pedro Orso-Delgado (Caltrans), and Elsa Saxod representing the COBRO.

Chair Crawford welcomed everyone to the meeting and self-introductions were made.

1. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 20, 2004, MEETING MINUTES

Action: The Borders Committee voted to approve the February 20, 2004, meeting minutes. One Committee member abstained.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS

Pedro Orso-Delgado noted that he recently attended the U.S.-Mexico Binational Group on Bridges and Border Crossings conference. At that conference, the proposed Border Crossing program was discussed. It was noted that those who have border crossing cards (known as laser visas) will not be required to comply with the new requirements of inspection of the entrances and exits control in the border unless they are more than 25 miles from the border or stay more than 72 hours in the United States. The goal of the program is to detect those overstaying in the United States by registering entries and exits. In addition, Orso-Delgado mentioned that there will be numerous high-level meetings regarding SR 11, in order to keep the issue on the radar screen.

Chair Crawford mentioned that on March 3, 2004, she attended the California-Baja California Regional Workgroup of the U.S. EPA - SEMARNAT (Mexico's Secretariat of the Environment) Border 2012 Program meeting in Rosarito. She made a presentation on the work that the Borders Committee is doing, while the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego made a presentation on the work of the Borders Energy Issues Group (BEIG). She added that she also attended a meeting at the University of San Diego's Joan Kroc Center for Peace and Justice, where the International Community Foundation publicly released a report entitled *Blurred Borders: Transboundary Impacts and Solutions in the San Diego-*

Tijuana Region. Blurred Borders is a report highlighting the cross-border impacts and solutions in the San Diego-Tijuana region.

Javier Diaz commented that he also attended the Border 2012 Program meeting in Rosarito. It was agreed that there is a need for information on current energy projects taking place on both the U.S. and Mexican sides of the border.

CONSENT ITEMS (3 and 4)

3. COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO) SUMMARY AND ACTIONS
 - (a) February 3, 2004
 - (b) March 2, 2004
 - (c) 2004 Summer Conference Working Group Report

4. I-15 INTERREGIONAL PARTNERSHIP (I-15 IRP) MEETING SUMMARY OF MARCH 26, 2004

Action: The Borders Committee voted to approve Consent Items 3 and 4.

REPORTS

5. EFFECTS OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION ON SAN DIEGO REGION

Councilmember Jack Feller, City of Oceanside, noted that he requested that the Executive Committee make a statement that there is a serious effect regarding illegal immigration in the San Diego region. He presented the Committee with some facts regarding this issue. He noted that the impact of this issue has resulted in fewer resources for California taxpayers, specifically in the education, criminal justice, and medical care area. Also, it has caused unwanted growth, which has made a negative impact in the areas of water, traffic, pollution, open space, affordable housing, jobs, and fraud. He added that illegal immigration is not a racial problem, but a population problem, with too much at stake to be ignored. He concluded that this is an issue that needs to be addressed and felt that there are solutions to this problem.

Councilmember Inzunza noted that the facts presented by Councilmember Feller were incomplete and only presented one side of the issue. He disagreed with Councilmember Feller in that the growth in the region cannot be attributed to immigrants from Mexico crossing the border—the majority of the population growth in San Diego is derived from San Diegans. He questioned what the Committee could do regarding this issue. He added that this is a federal government issue and doesn't think the government will buckle down on its employees. A lot of companies are hiring workers that are undocumented.

Supervisor Slater-Price indicated that this issue is a result of sharing a border with a country that has a significantly lower cost of living. She added that it would not be a fruitful debate whether illegal immigration should or should not happen—it's just the way that it is. The undocumented workers are an identifiable workforce. Supervisor Slater-Price noted that this

is a long-standing issue, but the real problem is the impact and how the region can deal with those impacts. The federal government is the entity that needs to regulate this. She commented that if the Committee is serious about this, it should consider developing and implementing some sort of an impact fee.

Mayor Pro Tem McCoy pointed out that California has a population of 36 million, as opposed to the two million undocumented migrants. Lots of changes are being made in different countries and those countries should be encouraged to aspire to a higher quality of living. She stated that she would like to see more benefits for those people that cross the border for the contributions that they make to the San Diego region's economy. Farming and garment producing are not considered as prime jobs in this region. There needs to be change regarding social movement over the next 25 years.

Councilmember Inzunza stated that there are several sides to this issue. He suggested that the Borders Committee work with the professionals on this issue to discuss possible solutions. He added that during tough economic times, it appears that immigrants are blamed for these types of issues.

Supervisor Slater-Price agreed that if there is going to be additional discussion on this issue, it should be based on solutions; otherwise, there will be a waste of time. This is a subject that everyone will not agree on.

Chair Crawford commented that whatever action the Committee decides to take, it needs to fit into the purview within the boundaries of the Borders Committee.

Supervisor Carrillo commended Councilmember Feller for bringing up this issue and added that sometimes tough stands need to be taken. He questioned how local government issues can be mitigated and how the economic impact can be addressed. Maybe the Committee can look at how the federal government can assist with mitigation and assessment. This is an ongoing issue that cannot be resolved in a short period of time.

Councilmember Bond stated that this issue is bigger than the Borders Committee can address and suggested that the Committee focus on the demand and how the infrastructure demands are going to be satisfied, regardless of where it comes from.

Councilmember Buckley noted that this issue should be discussed at a separate meeting and the meeting should be set up where specific issues can be addressed. It is a sensitive and difficult issue.

Pedro Orso-Delgado added that the Committee should look at the cause and the numbers in order to deal with the issue, determine how to provide the appropriate services, and identify the funding that is needed and pursue it.

Chair Crawford suggested that staff look at the issue, frame it in the context of the borders chapter and how it relates to the Councilmember's concern, and place the issue on a future meeting agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Monroe suggested that a Subcommittee be created to structure the day where there could be a workshop held on this issue.

Javier Diaz commented that the Mexican government agrees that the current situation cannot go on—*status quo* does not work. The need to enforce citizenship is hard to say and do. He added that the Consul General is more than willing to work with the proper authorities of the U.S. to find solutions that work for both countries. He pointed out that there are also positive effects to this issue because illegal immigrants pay federal, state, and sales tax, and are contributing to the economy. However, many taxpaying migrants do not know they are eligible for services that they have paid for through their tax contributions and are afraid of requesting them.

Councilmember Inzunza suggested that Elsa Saxod work on this issue. He also recommended that the workshop should address both the positive and negative effects of undocumented migrants living in the region.

Chair Crawford indicated that the Subcommittee will consist of Mayor Pro Tem Monroe, Mayor Pro Tem McCoy, Javier Diaz, and Elsa Saxod. She commented that Councilmember Feller will also work with this group and so will SANDAG staff.

Action: The Borders Committee agreed to create a Subcommittee to explore ways that specific issues can be addressed within the role of the Borders Committee.

6. UPDATE ON IMPERIAL COUNTY ISSUES

Supervisor Carrillo provided the Borders Committee with an update on Imperial County issues. He discussed the Gateway and the development that is currently underway at the Calexico-Mexicali port of entry; he talked about current and future transportation issues and Imperial County's relationship with Caltrans; he commented on the forthcoming Imperial Valley Mall; and he gave an overview of the housing projects and programs that Imperial County has been implementing. In addition, Supervisor Carrillo provided the Committee with the current status on the water transfer.

Pedro Orso-Delgado thanked the Supervisor for the overview. He noted that Caltrans is currently working with the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG) regarding its long-range plan due to Imperial Valley's tremendous increase in housing. By working together, they can prevent a situation similar to what is currently happening on Interstate 15 in San Diego. He added that there are currently 1,300-1,600 trucks crossing through Calexico daily. It is incumbent upon the region to have those roads replaced and maintained.

Committee members commented that Imperial County is slowly becoming a bedroom community for people that are coming from San Diego. It was noted that San Diegans are living in Riverside County and Imperial Valley and commuting to San Diego. The region needs to be aware of Imperial Valley's issues and should be aware of its growth.

Chair Crawford suggested that the Borders Committee hold a future meeting in Imperial County.

7. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR FY 05 FOR THE BORDERS COMPONENT OF THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chair Crawford mentioned that this item will not be discussed at today's meeting. She suggested that any comments or questions regarding this issue be conveyed to staff.

Action: The Borders Committee agreed to continue this item to the May meeting.

8. INTRODUCTION TO TRIBAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Councilmember Allan commented that one of the Borders Committee's goals for this year is to develop a relationship with the tribal governments. It's time to try to develop a good relationship and continue to strengthen it. He noted that last year, the SANDAG Board held a Summit with the Tribal Governments; however, the dialogue needs to continue. He added that he is disappointed that tribes are spoken about in a negative light because they are very involved and supportive in the San Diego community. He then introduced Mario Orso and Gary Rotto, both Caltrans staff, to bring forward additional issues.

Mario Orso, Native American Liaison for Caltrans, presented the Committee with a brief overview of tribal governments and Caltrans' activities with the tribal governments in the region. This included the way they function, the number of tribes in the U.S. vs. the number of tribes in California (California has the largest Native American population in the U.S.), and the tribal lands in San Diego and Imperial County. He also discussed some of the services that Caltrans' provides to the tribal governments including monitoring and reviewing documents proposing Native American development, developing resources, and assisting with inquiries.

Gary Rotto provided the Committee with definitions of key words and concepts relating to Native Americans. He added that Caltrans holds workshops on how to better understand the Native American culture and how to conduct business with Native Americans. The workshops have been well attended and received.

Committee discussion concluded that building a relationship with the tribal governments is important and needs to happen. However, building that relationship will take time. The attitude towards the tribes needs to change. It was suggested that the County of San Diego's Tribal Government Liaison come to a future Borders Committee meeting to brief the Committee. The County has developed a comprehensive report, which is a good resource for this subject. The Committee needs to learn the culture in order to develop a relationship. A lot of history needs to be overcome.

Staff noted that SANDAG has received funding to develop a needs assessment regarding tribal governments. It needs to be determined what services SANDAG has to offer the tribes. This is a goal that the Borders Committee could consider.

Chair Crawford commented that the Borders Committee has listed strategic initiatives relating to the tribal governments in the Borders Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive

Plan. She requested that the Borders map be updated to include the tribal governments in Imperial County and noted that this issue will be added to a future agenda.

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Borders Committee will be held on Friday, May 21, 2004, at 12:30 p.m. in SANDAG's Conference Room A on the 8th Floor.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

BOB LEITER

Director of Land Use and Transportation Planning

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