MINUTES
California-Mexico Border Relations Council Meeting
July 24, 2013 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Tijuana River Estuary Center
Conference Room
301 Caspian Way
Imperial Beach, California 91932

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by Chairman Rodriquez

I. Introductions

::: The following Council members were present:
Secretary Matt Rodriquez, California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), Chair
Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDF A), via teleconference
Secretary John Laird, Resources Agency (Resources), via teleconference
Director Mark Ghilarducci, California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES),
Secretary Diana Dooley, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS), was represented by Dr. Gil Chavez,
Secretary Brian Kelly, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), was represented by Ben DeAlba

II. Agency Updates

::: Each member presented an overview of border activities for their agency:

• California Environmental Protection Agency

::: Jose Angel (Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board) gave an update on the progress made to date on the Strategic Plan for the New River Improvement Project which the Council had release at the June 24, 2012 meeting. The Regional Board has contributed over $150K for Wetlands and Outreach campaigns as part of Supplemental Environmental Projects. Mexico has encased portions of the New River as identified in the plan alleviating some of the trash issues. Slaughter houses in Mexico have made significant improvements and work continues to bring these operations into compliance. On the US side Integration of the various monitoring programs and full implementation of regulatory programs have been completed data will be available in the CEDEN database in late 2013. Work is ongoing with the Municipalities and Ag community to meet the Plan’s recommendations.

Secretary Rodriquez asked regarding funding for a disinfection facility and other low hanging fruit that can be worked on as part of the Plan.
Mr. Angel clarified that the Federal government is the appropriate authority to implement the disinfection facility and also suggested continuing to providing technical support and in-kind services to the Mexican counterpart agencies.

::: Tomas Morales (San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board) Followed up on Chris Peregrin’s presentation describing the importance of working collaboratively with Mexico and also clarified that 70 percent of the Tijuana watershed is in Mexico.

::: Roger Vintze (Department of Toxic Substances Control) mentioned the responsibility of DTSC at the border relating to the inspections of commercial vehicles coming across the border. He spoke about the close working relationship DTSC border unit has with Mexican authorities (SEMARNAT and PROFEPA) and its importance for monitoring, packaging, labeling and identifying the origin of hazardous materials being transported to the US. Also mentioned was the DTSC reorganization, mentioning that the San Diego Office will remain intact. Lastly Roger mentioned that Grant funding received from the USEPA has allowed DTSC to partner with San Diego County to assist with border inspections, allowing DTSC staff to work on other projects such as South bound inspections.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture**

::: Secretary Ross mentioned that most of CDFA’s relationships with Mexico are through national governments and the USDA. She reported their Veterinarian dedicated to working with Mexico was no longer with the department and the position was lost along with many others, CDFA continues to work on issues with Apple Moth and Bovine Tuberculosis, coordination with Mexico is important for working through these issues to prevent the spreading of animal diseases and invasive species as well as sharing information and cooperating on health and safety issues. CDFA continues monitoring Avian Influenza through outreach in Southern California.

**Natural Resources Agency**

::: Secretary Laird mentioned that the governor had signed $30 million in the current new budget for Salto Sea restoration. The Agency is working with Senator Boxer’s office on Salton Sea issues. CalFire continues participating in the Border Agency Fire Council working together on emergency issues with border agencies. Through the recent reorganization of agencies, Calrecycle has been moved to CalEPA from the Natural Resources Agency.

::: Chris Peregrin (State Parks) Described the Tijuana Estuary describing it as a bi-national watershed. Talked about the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRC), a collaboration of over 30 agencies working together to resolve issues in the Tijuana River watershed the Team has identified priority issues with sediment and trash being the top 2. He showed slides demonstrating the growth in Tijuana which contributing to sediment and trash issues. The TRVRC is working with the Federal water agencies of both countries to potentially amending the 1944 water treaty between the U.S. and Mexico to address issues of sediment and trash. by winter of 2014. Described several on the ground projects being worked by the TRVRC removing, disposing of sediment, trash and restoration of wetlands.

**Business, Transportation and Housing Agency**

::: Assistant Secretary Ben DeAlba mentioned that CalTrans and CHP are the two organizations within their agency primarily working on border issues. He also mentioned the recent reorganization of the agency in its 24th day with a consolidated focus on transportation. Priorities of the new agency are transportation issues such as strategic planning, upgrades and freight mobility. CalTrans leads the California Freight Advisory Committee which will be developing a Freight Mobility Plan for the California-Mexico border. This committee will advise
CalTrans and serve as a forum to discuss freight related topics. The final Draft of the Freight Mobility Plan is due out in mid-2014.

::: Bill Figge (Caltrans District 11) This district is responsible for San Diego and Imperial Counties. Emphasized that trade with Mexico is important to both California and the U.S., contributing to over 6 million jobs, stating that 40% of imported goods have a U.S. component to them. CalTrans works with both U.S. and Mexican authorities (State and Federal) on border crossing issues. In regard to impacts of border delays, CalTrans funded a study done by SanDAG measuring the economic impacts of border delays. The study revealed that $7.2 billion is lost due to delays at the border. Other challenges aside from the economic impacts are environmental air quality and GHG related impacts. A study of the 3 border crossing in San Diego in 2009 measured the CO2 emissions at the equivalent of 80 Metric tons. CalTrans works with both federal governments on port expansion projects however; the U.S. side has progressed due to lack of GSA funding. The San Ysidro and Calexico ports have been affected (Mexico completed their part, the U.S has not). California and Baja California developed a first of its kind Border Master Plan which identifies projects and how to fund them in phases. Other border states are now following this plan. Finally, CalTrans is working with SanDAG on a new Public Private Partnership constructing a Toll crossing at Otay Mesa East, SanDAG will be the toll agency.

- **Health and Human Services Agency**

  ::: Gil Chavez with the California Office of Bi-national Border Health (COBBH) mentioned that COBBH plays a very active role at the border, dedicating an office for that purpose, maintaining a very good relationship with its partners. COBBH personnel introduced were Maria Celaya, Esmeralda Iniguez, Avelina Acosta and Prici Orozovich. The agency monitors health issues at the border – H1N1 was first detected by COBBH by this early warning system alerting the world of the new virus introduced. COBBH monitors the health status of communities and develops an annual report identifying key priorities areas along the border to focus on and work with Mexican partners. Continuing problems that are closely tracked and treated are HIV, tuberculosis, cancer and diabetes. COBBH also works with Mexican authorities tracking cheese products produced in Mexico (Queso Fresco task force). Partnerships COBBH takes part in are: Border Health Consortium of the Californias, Four corners Border, Mexican Consulate, Farm Worker Coalition and California-Mexico Border Health Commission. In July 2013 an unveiling of a web based system called the California Referral Infectious Disease Exchange, for reporting infectious diseases will take place. This system will eventually be a binational system addition. Finally, COBBH anticipates a problem with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act along the border due to the issues of legal and illegal status.

- **California Emergency Management Agency**

  ::: Secretary Ghilarducci mentioned the continued collaboration with partner states in the Border Governors’ Conference as part of the emergency work table. CalOES continues working on the development of an MOU on emergency management that will establish a legal framework allowing for prompt response to emergencies, collaboration on cross-border assistance and providing training and communication. Another area the working table is addressing is identification of criminals, issues with human trafficking, arms and narcotics trafficking. OES also continues to monitor funding provided to law enforcement for combating these issues. In the previous year there was an interdiction of about 1000 arms coming across the border. OES is in contact with Mexico regarding interoperable communication across the border in order to communicate during emergencies. Also in progress is an updating of the mutual aide compact with Baja California for providing resources to each other during emergencies. There continue to be talks regarding earth quake early warning systems with Mexico. OES is working closely with Baja California law enforcement on data sharing.
City of San Diego

::: Mario Lopez (Office of Binational Affairs) reinforced information provided by Caltrans relating to border crossings. Also mentioned the new City of San Diego office opened in Tijuana (February 2013) and invited state agencies to use the office if needed free of charge. Articles were shared that dealt with the important economic factors of the relationship of Tijuana and Mexico. Mario also talked about developing a work plan for continuity between changes of government in California and Mexico. Mentioned the need for political support in Washington and spoke of the effects the immigration bill may have on the border.

III. Public Comment

::: Paloma Aguirre requested an update of the Tire Recycling Reform Act. *CalRecycle will be consulted and an answer will follow.
::: Oscar Romo commented that Mexico has resources to support projects that benefit the US and suggests looking into how to tap into those resources.
::: Mario Lopez stated that border US cities on the north side of the border are very safe despite common perception.
::: Waylon Matson asked if there were any new update on the border condition index by the Department of Homeland Security and if there was any new information that could be shared with the public.
* OES will look into this request and then follow up with Mr. Matson.
::: Julie Collins asked if Mexican officials had been invited.
* Yes and although there were no Mexican officials at this meeting, the previous meeting had several Secretaries from Baja California in attendance.

IV. Action Items

Chairman Rodriguez reported that as a requirement of AB 3021, the Council must submit an annual report of its activities to the Legislature. The Draft report will be voted on at a follow up meeting. No action will be taken today.

Alex Rodarte gave a briefing on the status of the report and how it was organized this year.

V. Legislation Related to Border Issues

Alex Rodarte provided updates on border related legislation
- SJR 10 (Vargas, Chapter 75, Statutes of 2012), related to urging the President and Congress on stemming the trafficking of illicit United States firearms ammunition into Mexico.
- AJR 4 (Ben Hueso, Statutes of 2013), related to urging the President and Congress for funding of Infrastructure improvements at border crossing.

VI. Topics for Future Meetings

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 AM by Chairman Rodriguez

VIII. Lunch

IX. Tour of the Tijuana Estuary (1 PM – 3 PM)