

Environmental Agreements Between the State of California and Governments of the Republic of Mexico

Introduction to Environmental Agreements

The year 2001 proved to be a monumental year for environmental protection in the California – Baja California Border Region. The end of 2001 marked the first full year of the establishment of the Border Affairs Unit within Cal/EPA; we realized a greatly-expanded cooperative working relationship with our counterpart agencies in Mexico, and, most significantly; the signing of the environmental agreements in this booklet. The agreements between the State of California and the Governments in Mexico marked the first time such agreements have been reached by a U.S. Border State and the Republic of Mexico.

In March, 2001, California and Mexico, in the presence of California Governor Gray Davis and Mexican President Vicente Fox Quesada, signed three historic agreements of cooperation on environmental issues. The subjects of the agreements involve industrial wastewater monitoring and pretreatment along the California - Baja California border, implementation of an "Emissions Testing" pilot program in Tijuana, and cooperation in the protection of the Sea of Cortez ecosystem.

On August 16, 2001, the Secretary of Cal/EPA and the Director of the Dirección General de Ecología signed a related agreement on the promotion of sustainable development in the California - Baja California Border Region. Another agreement signed by Cal/EPA in 2001 was a memorandum of understanding with the Baja California Institute of Public Health Services to initiate a study of lead in the blood of residents in specific cities of Baja California.

Both governments are currently implementing the above agreements. As of this writing, for example, siting for the installation of emissions testing equipment is currently being conducted. Training for operators of the equipment in Mexico is being finalized. It is anticipated that by the end of 2002, Tijuana will begin the operation of its first emissions testing program.

Additionally studies are being completed for the industrial wastewater pretreatment and monitoring program to identify facilities that could benefit from such a program. Later this year, a plan will be developed to make an ongoing pretreatment and monitoring program in Mexico self-sustaining. The blood lead study is currently in the design phase and is to be implemented before the end of 2002.

The year 2002 saw the signing of an additional agreement between Government Agencies regarding the development and promotion of elementary school environmental education.

Also contained in this booklet is an environmental agreement signed between the San Diego Natural History Museum and Cal/EPA. This agreement has already seen results with the development and translation of K – 12 environmental education materials that will be used to teach schoolchildren in Mexico the importance of protecting our shared environment.

"Working Towards a Cleaner Environment Within a Shared Border"

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