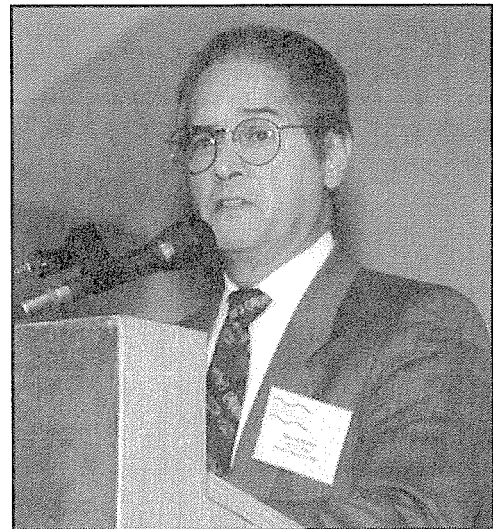


Marvin Waters was recently appointed Director of the Environmental Protection Agency's El Paso Border Outreach Office. Marvin has been with the EPA and its predecessor agencies since 1966 giving him 29 years of federal service and environmental experience primarily in the water program. He has served as Section Chief of the Municipal Facilities Program, and worked on major programs including the Colonia Assistance Program for Texas and New Mexico, the State Revolving Fund Loan Program and the IBWC-Mexico Wastewater Planning Grants. Marvin also has served as a regional EEO counselor and as the Hispanic Employment Program Manager. He graduated in 1976 from University of Texas at Arlington with a degree in civil engineering.



FEDERAL INITIATIVES ALONG THE BORDER

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Good afternoon. The topic I want to discuss concerns the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiatives along the border. Before I do that, I would like to provide a little background on the initiatives we have funded and how some of these initiatives came about along the border. Back in 1983, the La Paz Agreement was signed by both the United States' President and the Mexican President and set the stage for both governments to look at the environmental problems along the border, to try to identify those problems and determine how they could be resolved while conserving a cleaner environment along the border. The U.S.-Mexican border we are talking about extends from Baja, California all the way down to Brownsville, Texas, an area in length of approximately 2,000 miles, about 200 miles of which is part of the New Mexico border with Mexico.

The La Paz Agreement created two national coordinators, one in Mexico and one in the United States, to coordinate all environmental activities. The United States national coordinator was Timothy B. Atkeson, Assistant Administrator for International Activities of EPA and Dr. Sergio Reyes Lujan, Undersecretary for Ecology of SEDUE. The agreement also created six joint working groups in the United States and Mexico. These six working groups were supposed to address particular environmental medias: air, water, hazardous waste, contingency planning/emergency response, pollution prevention and enforcement. These six professional work groups got together and came up with a plan called the Integrated Border Environmental Plan. This was a two-year plan to address environmental issues along the border. Currently in 1995, we have started work on an expanded plan called the Border 21 Plan, also referred to as the

Frontera XXI Plan, which is the Spanish translation for the binational plan.

My staff and I have been conducting domestic outreach meetings. We conducted six meetings from Brownsville to Las Cruces, where we concluded last night. Our meetings were scheduled for 6:00 p.m. to try to get local input and we had roughly 75 citizens who attended the meeting last night in Las Cruces. I wish more of you could have been there but I know you all had prior commitments.

The Border 21 Plan or the expansion plan is not going to cover only the six environmental medias I mentioned earlier. We also are going to have three new medias: environmental health, natural resources and data information systems. In preparing for this plan, we have nine federal agencies involved, with EPA as head agency. The other agencies are the Department of Interior, Health and Human Services, Department of Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, U.S. State Department, International Boundary and Water Commission, and two new agencies, the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank, that were created due to the North American Free Trade Agreement. Working jointly with EPA and the other agencies in developing this Border 21 Plan is the New Mexico Environment Department and the state Border Health Council. In Texas we have six state agencies involved in coordinating this plan: the Texas Water Development Board, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, Texas Department of Health, Texas General Land Office, Texas Department of Transportation, and the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. At the headquarters level, we have six major offices that are coordinating this effort. They include the Office of International Activities; Air and Radiation; Water; Solid Waste and Emergency Response; Enforcement and Compliance Assurance; and Policy, Planning and Evaluation.

At the regional level, Region 6, located in Dallas, has a five-state jurisdiction of which New Mexico and Texas are two and Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana are the others. We now have permanent status in the El Paso area where I head the El Paso Border Outreach Office. We also have a satellite office located in McAllen. Due to limited resources, we can only staff that office on a biweekly basis, so

we are there about two days every two weeks. Region 9, which shares the border concerns, has their main office in San Francisco and a border office in San Diego. EPA also has a liaison office in the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

The type of resources expended for projects along the border in FY94—monies appropriated by Congress for our program which we in turn award to the states—was \$100 million for wastewater infrastructure along the border. Of that \$100 million, \$52 million was provided to Tijuana for their wastewater improvements and \$37 million went to expanding the wastewater treatment plant in Nogales, Arizona, that treats the wastewater from Nogales, Mexico and returns the treated wastewater back to Nogales, Mexico. Also, a \$10 million grant was given to the International Boundary and Water Commission for planning and designing wastewater infrastructures along the Mexican border, and I am referring strictly to communities on the Mexican side, not on the border.

Also in 1995, \$50 million was awarded to the Texas Water Development Board for colonia wastewater improvements in Texas. New Mexico received \$20 million in FY93-94 for colonia wastewater improvements in New Mexico, with the majority of the colonias located in Doña Ana County. Of the \$20 million awarded to the New Mexico Environment Department, roughly \$5.4 million has been obligated for planning, design and construction of about 11 projects. Other projects are in the planning stage right now, including eight projects located in Doña Ana County. In Texas, we have awarded roughly \$150 million to date for the colonia projects, of which Texas has matched that amount by \$70 million. So of the \$220 million, roughly \$80 million has been obligated for colonias in the Lower Valley of El Paso.

For FY96, the President's proposal for colonia funding is for an additional \$100 million for planning, design and construction. The proposal language was amended to include water and wastewater infrastructure projects for colonias along the border. The initial FY96 monies were strictly for wastewater. Included in the 1996 budget proposal is another \$50 million for colonia wastewater improvements in Texas. There are no monies earmarked for additional funding for colonias in New Mexico. Included in that budget is \$27 million that will be awarded to state

Federal Initiatives Along the Border

agencies for monitoring, training, technical assistance, enforcement, and emergency response.

I have brought some Border 21 Fact Sheets that I am more than happy to share with you. They have our telephone number as well as a 1-800 number that now is operational. You may call that number to receive additional information on our Border 21 Plan or any documents prepared and published by EPA. If you would like us to mail these to you, we will be more than happy to do so.

All projects funded by EPA since FY94 along the border are broken down by media. There are 17 projects of various types that were funded by EPA. We present a short description of how much money was provided, what the project was for, and list the contact person. I encourage all of you to obtain this document and learn about the types of activities being funded and the types of environmental issues we are trying to resolve along the border.

Earlier I mentioned that we had conducted domestic meetings on the Border 21 Plan. In talking to communities from Brownsville to Las Cruces, the critical environmental issues seem to be the same—air, water quality, and colonias. Colonias are a concern down in Cameron County and Hidalgo County where there is a larger concentration of colonias, and the same is true in El Paso and Doña Ana counties. Concerning water quality issues, the public is saying that there was a lack of binational rules and regulations, lack of emphasis placed on international concerns, lack of information, illegal dumping not only by maquiladoras but also by those on the U.S. side of the border, the need for additional water resources, and the impact of runoff by pesticides and other toxic chemicals. On November 1, 1995 starting at 9:00 a.m. at the airport Marriott Hotel in El Paso, we will be conducting a binational Border 21 meeting in which our counterpart, Semarnap as well as EPA will have six working groups. Each subgroup will take all the information we have gathered from all six meetings and try to formulate a five-year plan of action taking into consideration the limited funding that Congress has awarded us. The climate right now is that EPA's budget is going to be reduced by maybe 30 percent. That reduction includes not only resources but also monies used to clean up the environment. Everybody wants to downsize the government and it is being done. We are downsizing, but as we down-

size, the burden to improve the environment falls to the state. The monies that EPA was spending will no longer be there, thus, the states will have to provide the resources. The states will inherit the problem, which we as taxpayers are going to continue to pay for.

I am extending an invitation to those who live here locally to attend that binational meeting. It is a public meeting and your opinions will be heard and recorded. I hope to see you there. Thank you.