

**Binational Action Plan on Developing Waste Management and Prevention Infrastructure
U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Plan
Waste Policy Forum**

The U.S. and Mexico developed the Border 2012 Plan program to protect the environment and public health in the U.S.-Mexico border region. One of the objectives to reduce land contamination states:

“Identify needs and develop an action plan to improve institutional and infrastructure capacity for waste management and pollution prevention as they pertain to hazardous and solid waste and toxic substances along the U.S.-Mexico border. Starting in 2005, the plan will be implemented and concluded by 2012.”

The Waste Policy Forum has identified four priorities for improving the institutional and infrastructure capacity of waste management and prevention under the Border 2012 program. These priorities include:

- Tire pile prevention and cleanup
- Siting more hazardous waste management facilities in Mexico
- Specific initiatives addressing waste stream generation, and oversight and management of cross-border movement tracking
- Municipal waste management

This action plan describes the priorities and provides recommended actions to meet them.

Tire Pile Prevention and Clean-up

While the Border 2012 Plan highlights cleaning-up tire piles, it is also useful to build recycling and waste-to-energy capacity to prevent the creation of new tire piles in the border area. The U.S. and Mexico will subscribe to basic principles upon which to develop a border tire strategy based on environmentally sound management of waste tires. The principles propose relying on a range of waste tire uses, recycling, waste-to-energy, and other approaches that avoid or minimize creation of new environmental emissions. The proposed actions for a border tire management program include: an assessment of major tire piles in the border area, market development to encourage environmentally acceptable end use products and applications, pile abatement to eliminate selected piles, and public outreach to involve interested stakeholders.

The U.S. and Mexico are identifying tire piles in the border area and assessing the optimal methods for diverting waste tires from tire piles as well as cleaning-up piles by considering: crumb rubber applications, tire-derived fuel projects, and civil engineering applications, among other methods. Waste tires that have been stockpiled are the most challenging to clean-up, and there is a specific border objective to clean-up three of the larger border waste tire piles.

Consequently, a goal of this action plan is to reduce the creation of new tire piles by finding and/or developing markets for tire-derived products to increase waste tire recycling, as well as establishing compliance and enforcement programs to prevent new tires piles.

The Border 2012 program plans to pilot methods that are most promising to maximize recycling, as well as those that can eliminate waste tires expediently. The goal of these pilots is to examine the most viable alternatives for cleanup and estimate costs to implement recycling and waste-to-energy options. The pilots will provide the knowledge to develop waste tire clean-up and pollution prevention projects based on using the resources and methods that make the most environmental, technical and economic sense for a particular locality or region. These pilots could lead to efforts to educate engineers, the academic community, the federal government, state and local agencies, and public and private contractors about the effective uses of recycled tire products.

Once the most effective options for clean-up and diverting waste tires from tire piles are identified, the project participants will seek the funding necessary to foster broader implementation of clean-up and pollution prevention for tires.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) will partner with border states and other relevant government, academic, and industry groups, including departments of transportation, in implementing this program.

Improving Conditions to Increase Chances of Siting Hazardous Waste Management Facilities in Mexico

There is a need to build adequate treatment, recycling and disposal capacity for hazardous waste generated in the border region, particularly to meet the needs created by increases in manufacturing in Mexico during the past couple of decades. The U.S. and Mexico will work together on fostering conditions in which it is most feasible to safely site a hazardous waste management facility, or several facilities, to serve Mexican border industries. An essential ingredient is the willingness of a commercial firm to develop the facility. The U.S. and Mexico plan to work on promoting conditions which would increase the interest of a commercial developer to site a facility by, for example, working to strengthen compliance assistance and enforcement. The proposed actions include identifying the conditions conducive to siting facilities and encouraging government-private sector collaboration and general public involvement to increase the likelihood of facility siting; discussing environmental regulations at all levels of government (local, state and federal) that regulate or impact the establishment and operation of a hazardous waste management facility; and encouraging market and financial incentives.

Waste Stream Specific Initiatives

The U.S. and Mexico plan to explore a few key waste streams which are good candidates for capacity building efforts. The governments could then use pilot projects to foster and promote

potential markets for the recycling and management of these waste streams. The proposed actions include holding workshops and developing guidelines on the environmentally sound management of selected waste streams, promoting market development through government-private partnerships that will streamline permitting and strengthen enforcement against illegal recycling or disposal practices, creating links from the SEMARNAT website to relevant information in Spanish on the U.S. EPA website, and involving national and international waste trade associations.

The program hopes to build regional capacity through implementation of small scale pilot projects to determine which methods are most effective, and then work to expand the application of these methods to other parts of the border area. The pilots will also be used to increase opportunities for outreach. EPA and SEMARNAT will seek the funding needed to implement these pilots and to disseminate the application of methods found to be most effective.

The institutional capacity building approach could also be applied to the issue of cross-border tracking and inspection of hazardous waste shipments by U.S. and Mexican federal and state authorities at the ports of entry. Oversight and inspection procedures and protocols could be developed in conjunction with the federal and state authorities on both sides of the border.

The Waste Policy Forum will also seek to identify efforts being undertaken by other organizations to address the issue of solid waste accumulation on federal, state, local and tribal lands due to undocumented immigration traffic. This activity will assist in aligning efforts to address this issue in a coordinated manner.

Municipal Solid Waste Management

Increased waste collection and management for border communities continues to be a basic border need. Increasing options for properly managing waste includes increasing opportunities for diverting waste for recycling. The possible actions on municipal waste include: making information available to increase the technical capacity for improving operating practices at existing and proposed landfills, recycling facilities and transfer stations; promoting basic standards for siting and operating landfills; developing integrated solid waste management plans; creating links from the SEMARNAT website to municipal waste guidelines in Spanish on the U.S. EPA website; involving national and international waste trade associations; and increasing outreach on best waste management practices. The U.S. and Mexico hope to promote methods in the border area to: improve landfill siting, increase and improve municipal waste collection and operation practices; control vector populations such as rodents, flies and mosquitoes; reduce the danger of explosive gas emissions; limit groundwater contamination; and control the run-on and run-off of rain water which can flow over landfills and discharge pollution into nearby rivers and streams. EPA and SEMARNAT will seek the funding needed to implement these municipal waste landfill and recycling projects.