**R6 Texas- Coahuila-Nuevo Leon- Tamaluipas (4-State) Regional Workgroup (RWG)**
**Summary of Border 2020 Key Accomplishments and Priorities for the 2015-2016 period**

This region is very large geographically—the border for this part of Texas and the adjoining states of Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas is 806 miles, or 1,296 kilometers, long and includes a significant number of municipalities

The Four-State Regional Workgroup has six co-chairs. Because of this size, the task forces are geographical sub-regions: "Amistad, Falcón, and Gulf" and each of those task forces in turn has committees tied to the Border 2020 goals that are most important to each task force.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) leads on organizing task force and committee meetings, with collaboration from a Mexican liaison for the Four-State Region who is funded by EPA, and supported by R6EPA Border Team,

Two years ago, in August 2014 the 4-state RWG and several of its six co-chairs held a senior executive leadership meeting in San Antonio, TX followed by the RWG annual public meeting held in July 2014 in San Antonio, TX.

Of the 60 projects listed in the B2020 Action Plan, 28 have been completed, a 47% accomplishment. Twelve of them are in progress, 12 are on hold and 8 have been cancelled.

Of the various Goal's, a few of the 4-state accomplishments include:

- In the area of **Air Quality**, in the Municipio of Nuevo Laredo, SEMARNAT and Tamaulipas' Environmental Secretariat (SEDUMA,) worked on a diagnosis of heavy duty commercial trucks involved in cross-border trade, identified retrofit technologies that would reduce emissions, and along with TAMU-TTI carried out a workshop on "Transporte Limpio" aimed at driver to reduce usage of diesel and eco-friendly driving,
- SEDUMA - Tamaulipas, held an energy efficiency workshop at which more than 100 staff persons from 16 Municipios were trained and received hands on experience.

- In the area of **Water Quality**, The City of Laredo organized regional workshops on water conservation and on management of fats, oils, and grease. In collaboration with a state legislator, the TCEQ have organized "Annual Water Awareness Summits" in 2013 and 2014 in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, both attracting more than 200 participants,
- At border cities in Tamaulipas' wastewater and drinking water facilities "Energy Audits" have been carried out.

- In the area of **Materials and Waste Management**, the Secretariat for Sustainable Development of Nuevo León surveyed municipalities on both sides of the border regarding management of scrap tires and developed a list of "best practices". This report was published in Spanish,
- In Tamaulipas, following the guide of Nuevo Laredo experience, border communities have implemented a program for receiving "household's hazardous and electronic waste.

- In the area of **Enhanced Joint Preparedness and Response**, existing sister-city contingency plans were updated for both Eagle Pass-Piedras Negras and Del Rio-Ciudad Acuna. Between 2013-2014, EPA, PROFEPA, Civil Protection along with Tribal, State, and local partners participated in three binational drills: a) Laredo - Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas b) Kickapoo Tribe (2 events).

Commented [RC1]:

- In celebration of Binational Health week, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio designed and implemented a binational project that trained 20 promotoras from Texas and 20 promotoras from Tamaulipas to work with families on reducing environmental exposures experienced by two vulnerable populations - expectant mothers and very young children. Subsequent to the training, the promotoras provided outreach to 400 pregnant women or mothers with young children in a three month period.

A summary of priorities and emerging issues to be addressed in the 2015-2016 action plans:

- Regarding 2015-2016 priorities, committee meetings are scheduled in the fall in our task force areas:
  - Goal 1: Continue the development of vehicle inspection programs in Mexican border municipios,
  - At US-Mexico's Port of Entry where used vehicles are being imported into Mexico, implement Mexico's environmental law's requirement for vehicles to comply with vehicle emissions regulations,

  - Goal 2: Improve Drinking and Wastewater treatment facilities' operation and increase their service coverage, while eliminating raw discharges to the Rio Grande,
  - Continue the binational water quality initiative in the Lower Rio Grande, an explicit Border 2020 objective,

  - Goal 3: Build on efforts the past two years to encourage "best practices" in scrap tire management, promoting the implementation of regulations set by the State of TX to control and manage scrap tires at the point of generation,
  - Improve infrastructure, management and operation of disposal and transfer sites for municipal solid waste,

  - Goal 4: Overcome roadblocks to developing better joint contingency plans and holding simulation exercises in the Laredo-Nuevo Laredo area,
  - Update the Emergency Response Plans that remain pending at border communities,

- Goal 5: Promote training and improve professional profile of enforcement officials for environmental compliance at the three levels of government, aimed to strengthening the legal enforcement,
- Encourage additional projects related to public education on environmental health topics

In the past year through statements and presentations by the public at that RWG meeting by Texas and Tamaulipas officials; concerns and pressuring issues caused by shale gas and oil development confirmed it's of great importance and a very hot topic

It should be noted that: 15 years ago the border program (Border XXI at that time) was run mostly out of Mexico City and Washington and Dallas and San Francisco, and the federal governments were being criticized by local communities. Now, we have local communities deciding and implementing their priorities and projects and telling the federal governments what they are accomplishing.