

MR. COOKE: Thank you very much. Again, my name is Gregg Cooke, and I'm the regional administrator for EPA Region 6. EPA Region 6 is Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. As a result, our region has the greatest amount of space on the border from all the way through Texas and New Mexico.

Prior to coming to EPA, I was with the Attorney General's Office in Texas, and in that job I served as the environmental liaison for the state of Texas and when the NAFTA went through in terms of discussion of the impact of state laws on NAFTA. So for a long time I've been with environmental aspects of the border and how they impact on the environment.

Talking before we came -- and I'll try to cover some general comments, knowing that some of my colleagues down the line will get more specific on certain border institutions, specifically the BECC and the NADBank.

COMMISSIONER HILLS: Mr. Cooke, I neglected to say at the outset of this panel -- I think most of you were in the audience at the testimony of the last -- we have a timing device --

MR. COOKE: Right.

COMMISSIONER HILLS: -- and we will hope that you can cover your topic in eight minutes.

MR. COOKE: I intend to do so, and as a result of that I was going to limit some of my remarks, knowing that they'll cover some of those things.

The first thing I will tell you is if you look at the border the biggest single thing I can probably tell you right now in terms of the future is that of population. In 1960 the population was 1 million; in 1999 it was over 11.5 million, and if you look at a growth rate of 6 percent per year, the border population will be 25 million by 2020. So if you take that statistic and you look at border infrastructure, you can see the daunting challenge that we have in front of us.

Now the first -- to go back some years, the first agreement that we had with Mexico in relation to border environment was defined in the 1983 agreement for the protection of the environment -- improvement of the environment known as the La Paz Agreement. That was the first international agreement with Mexico to look at certain international environmental concerns and start to set up committees or groups to work on it. And in

1992 the U.S. and Mexico released the Integrated Border Plan and even though it was a very ambitious plan it didn't go far enough to protect the border region and lay predicate for the NAFTA.

Then we have the NAFTA, and even though it had a lot of trade implications, obviously, the most important thing for us was that it focused on the border with the creating of two border-specific institutions, the first of their kind in the world, the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank, both of which are represented here today.

Both of these are projects -- sister projects by the BECC and NADBank to focus on improvement of water supply, wastewater treatment, and municipal solid waste located within a 100-kilometer range of the border. That is the border zone as defined by all these agreements.

Victor Miramontes and Pete Silva will talk about these agencies, but they come the focus of dealing with the primary of border infrastructure along the border.

At the same time, the EPA, along with Mexico agencies created what we call the Border XXI, which is the next iteration of binational cooperation. Established in '94, it built upon the efforts of the previous integrated border plan and expanded the scope of binational work into a broader framework. We have binational work groups dedicated to air, water, hazardous waste, cooperative enforcement and compliance, pollution prevention, natural resources, health, contingency planning, emergency response, environmental information and resources, and we've begun to address these pressing issues.

We have several parameters to guide our mission in Mexico: to ensure public involvement in the development and implementation; build capacity and decentralize environmental management to augment federal, state, and local participation; and ensure interagency cooperation to maximize available resources.

We have set five-year work plans that are refined and honed and developed by the work groups. As a result, we're coming up to a milestone as we look at the specific progress that we've made with Border XXI with Mexico.

One of the things that we have done, we have developed a set of environmental indicators and published a lengthy report in 1997 which should be available to you -- and we have copies -- which is the United States-Mexico Environmental Indicators Report of 1997, which detailed the work of every single work group in quantifiable format.

For example, the enforcement indicators include the number of enforcement actions taken on the border by media, the penalties assessed, and the amount of pollution reduced as a result of the enforcement action. The hazardous and solid waste indicators track the number of disposal facilities in the border region.

The air group creates an inventory of border city emissions and measuring the days of border air quality.

So you can't know where you're going until you know where you are and where you've been, and so this is a tremendous document to indicate a baseline indicator of environmental conditions along the border, the first such document that was created with binational support.

There are some issues though that still elude us, for example in air quality. You have such issues as energy production across the border with

different standards that have impacts upon the United States as well as Mexico and upon Big Bend National Park, so we still have a number of challenges to go.

As a result though, our agency -- agency-wide resources of EPA have really in real terms been declining in recent years. Next year has its budget a total of \$3,400,000 for use for every work group along the entire border. Now, Congress has appropriated \$45 million for border infrastructure, which will pass through my office for the BECC and NADBank infrastructure projects, but this does not come close, as you will find out, to meeting the full demand for infrastructure.

Finally, I want to speak generally about decentralization. A very important milestone in the life of Border XXI occurred last year when the ten border states, both United States and Mexican states along the border, signed a memorandum of agreement with EPA and SEMARNAP called the Ten State Coordination Principles.

As you know, when we started out this binational cooperation, it was a federal to federal type of cooperation, but as the states grew in their capacity to deal with environmental issues, there was a desire by the states to have better and more effective cooperation

and actually commitment to border environment, so as a result, last year we signed an agreement with all the states on cooperation along the border, and that is to ensure that every binational work group includes the states as partners in addressing the needs of the environment.

We think this is incredibly important if we're going to proceed ahead with Border XXI to include a wider variety of stakeholders and public involvement.

Finally, there was, as you know, a report done by General Accounting Office which concluded recently, and one of the most important recommendations from this report is the need for a border-wide strategic plan on the environment, for which EPA fully agrees, and that is probably one of the most critical objectives for EPA in the short term, is to work with Mexico to develop that strategic plan.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER HILLS: Thank you, Mr. Cooke.

Our next witness is Stephen Mumme, professor of political science at Colorado State University. Welcome and we look forward to your remarks.