



January – February  
2010

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## California Mexico Border Relations Council Meeting

The California Mexico Border Relations Council convened February 16, 2010 at EPA headquarters in Sacramento, CA to discuss among other important matters the New River Improvement Project.

Miguel Figueroa, CNRC Executive Director, provided a statement to the council informing about the activities performed by the CNRC and the City of Calexico, the statement gave detail of the following items:

- Background on New River Improvement Project
- Status of securing

project funding

- Initial Phase 1: Activities for the New River Improvement Project
- Public Outreach and Education

The meeting was attended by Linda Adams, Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency (Chair); Lester Snow, Secretary of the Resources Agency; Dale Bonner, Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency; A.G. Kawamura, Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture; and Matthew Bettenhausen, Secretary of the California Emergency

Management Agency.

A motion was made to begin the implementation of AB 1079, create the Technical Advisory Committee and develop a cost share agreement with the City of Calexico for the commencement of the New River Improvement Project. This motion was ratified and will be executed by Cal EPA staff and the City of Calexico.

This meeting marked a milestone in the process of creating the New River Improvement Project, the California Mexico Border Relations Council reiterated their role as co-leaders with the City of Calexico in this project.

## Rainfall in Imperial Valley overflows the New River



The first rainfall of 2010 in Imperial Valley created an overflow of the New River at the Calexico International Boundary with Mexico. The pictures to the right reflect how the overflow caused the adjacent dirt roads to the riverbanks to be flooded, while on the left picture a mass of non-biodegradable detergents coming from Mexicali's Zaragoza treatment plant accumulate at the bar screens located south of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge.

## Cal EPA sponsors New River workshop in Calexico, CA

Ricardo Martinez, Cal EPA's Deputy Secretary for Border Affairs, hosted this workshop that united the lead agencies for the New River Improvement Project, City of Calexico officials and Cal EPA.

This workshop welcomed 30 + local, state and federal leaders learned more about the process of creating a strategic plan to implement the New River Improvement Project.

This gathering exemplified the commitment of state and local agencies to create a work group that can provide input in the process of creating and implementing a clean-up project for the New River.

Carl Nettleton, event facilitator, stated that the meeting was intended to fulfill 5 objectives that could help shape the New River Improvement Project.

Objectives:

**List of stakeholders which may be used as part of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** The Cal/Mex Border Relations Council (CMBRC) will pick these members. Over 60 agencies were named as agencies that have a relation to this project.

**List of resources to support New River Improvement Project** Numerous studies, publications and reports were listed as potential tools to help the project. The technical expertise of the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Army Corps of Engineers were included in this list.

**Calendar** Ricardo Martinez informed that at the next meeting a calendar of events would be presented, but he expects a work-plan for this project to be finalized by No-

for this project to be finalized by November 2010.

**Develop timeline with milestones** Ricardo Martinez determined that once the CMBRC selects the members that will make up the TAC a meeting will be scheduled in Calexico to inform the next steps.

**Obtain input on recruiting members for TAC** Each agency shared the assets they could provide the TAC, the facilitator took note of every response from the audience and an action plan will be presented at the next meeting.

To close out this session Ricardo Martinez thanked everyone for their collaboration and announced that follow up meetings will take place in Calexico in the coming months, more details will be disclosed in a future date.

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[www.calexiconewriver.org](http://www.calexiconewriver.org)**

## CNRC's priorities for Spring 2010

The CNRC will assist the City of Calexico in the preparation and submittal of the RFA packet to Caltrans. Once completed and approved the City of Calexico and Caltrans will be able to execute the SAFETEA-LU as passed in 2005.

The CNRC intends to amend the existing MOU with the City of Calexico in order to be capable of contracting with the City for a variety of tasks related to the implementation of the New River Improvement Project. These amendments will create a joint approval

of the overall master budget and distribution of funds.

The CNRC will seek the support of Congressman Bob Filner to create an appropriation that grants the Army Corps of Engineers the right to implement the authorization they possess to be part of any remedial project for the New River as established in law passed in the 1940's.

The CNRC will continue to work with CA Assemblyman Manuel Perez on new legislation that can

bring more opportunities to remediate the New River predicament in Imperial Valley. The success of AB 1079 has garnered much support that follow up legislation for the New River is a priority for the CNRC. Assemblyman Perez has championed New River efforts since his first day in office.

As part of the ongoing efforts of the CNRC to seek more core operation support for the day to day operations, a fundraising strategy is in the process of being finalized and will be ready to be implemented in the coming weeks.

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