

SEDUE and EPA have taken care to build this plan on the very strong base of environmental cooperation that has existed between the two countries for many years, and especially since 1983, when the United States and Mexico signed a Border Environmental Agreement broadly expanding their cooperative efforts. The two agencies already are involved in several joint environmental projects in the border area, and the plan presented here complements and expands on those efforts. In addition, this plan benefits from the long history of Mexican-U.S. cooperation through the binational International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), which for almost 50 years has been responsible for bilateral water sanitation projects along the border.

In its first stage (1992-1994), this plan intends to address the most serious environmental problems now existing or emerging in the border area. Those problems have been defined through the collective expertise and professional judgment of SEDUE and EPA, IBWC, and border state government officials.

At the same time, SEDUE and EPA recognize that current understanding of environmental conditions along the border is incomplete. Moreover, those conditions may change if a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is ratified. Consequently, this plan should not be considered final or complete; rather, it is a work in progress. It will be reexamined by the end of 1994, and in the second stage of this plan (1997-2000) binational environmental protection efforts will be refined and redirected in light of improved understanding of the border environment and the possible environmental effects of a free trade agreement.

SEDUE and EPA intend to achieve the goals of this plan by targeting their initial efforts on the most serious existing problems. Because most of the border area's population and industrial facilities is concentrated in pairs of Mexican and U.S. "sister" cities located across the border from each other, most of the bilateral environmental protection efforts outlined in the first stage of this plan will be carried out in those cities.

In order to implement this plan, Mexico has committed to investing at least \$460 million over the next three years in environmental projects in Mexican border cities, and \$147 million is earmarked for projects in 1992. President Bush's FY 1993 budget request for EPA includes \$179 million for border-area environmental protection, including \$170 million for wastewater treatment projects. Funds for environment-related projects in the border area also have been requested in the proposed FY 1993 budgets for the U.S. Departments of State, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Export-Import Bank. If the President's budget request is approved, the U.S. government is committed to spending more than \$240 million protecting the border area environment in 1993.

Even though this plan has been prepared by SEDUE and EPA, its success will depend on the efforts of many people. Everyone who lives and works in the border area contributes to environmental pollution; everyone who lives and works in the border area must be involved in its protection. Border state and local governments, businesses and trade associations, the binational International Boundary and Water Commission, non-government organizations, and educational institutions all have important roles to play.

This plan is comprehensive in the sense that it seeks to protect water, air, and land by marshalling the resources of both the public and private sectors. Although its initial goal is