

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

(1) From your agency's point of view, what regulations can be reduced to improve communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region?

N/A

(2) What are the main trade issues between the United States and Mexico that you have identified as having an impact (both positive and negative) on your agency or your area of work?

The General Land Office has worked diligently for more than a decade to improve availability and exchange of information about all aspects of energy, through the annual US-Mexico Border Energy Forum as well as related educational and promotional activities.

(3) Having studied the flow of commerce at ports of entry between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial vehicles across the border, what actions would you establish to aid that commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles?

Our border energy program has worked with groups that have proposed priority access at border crossings to vehicles with alternative fuels like natural gas. This would improve border congestion and ease related air quality concerns in the area.

(4) How do you work with federal officials to resolve transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people across the border between Texas and Mexico?

N/A

(5) How does your agency work with federal officials to create a unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs?

N/A

(6) Has your agency identified problems involved with border truck inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure? What are those? What solutions/recommendations does your agency propose?

Again, projects that use clean fuels like natural gas for maquiladora and other fleets that cross the border regularly could be valuable for air quality and congestion improvements.

(7) How do you work to increase funding for the North American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater facilities?

The GLO is cooperating with the North American Development Bank to demonstrate the use of renewable energy in bank-financed infrastructure projects.

(8) Has your agency explored the sale of excess electric power from Texas to Mexico? What are your findings?

Through the Border Energy Forum, the GLO has worked to encourage regional planning that makes the most economic and environmental sense. A workshop between the Comisión Federal de Electricidad and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) was held in conjunction with the Forum in Austin in 2003; we can provide the extensive ERCOT report on that issue. We have continued to track the issue, with an update presented at the most recent Border Energy Forum in Tampico in October 2006.

Generally, the cross-border flow of electricity is less challenging in Far West Texas outside the ERCOT grid because of synchronicity issues between the U.S. and Mexican grids.

(9) Has your agency identified any areas of environmental protection that need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican states? If so, which are those areas and what type of protective measures need to be taken?

The Border Energy Forum strives to increase cooperation between Texas and neighboring Mexican states, emphasizing the links between energy and environmental protection. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are major priorities. The GLO has worked with educational groups – preparing bilingual, binational materials – to encourage regional development of sustainable energy, since it can have an impact on regional air quality and economic development.

The agency's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division also has worked with the U.S. Coast Guard and Mexican agencies on preparedness for any future spills that could have a cross-border impact.

(10) Has your agency identified common challenges to health care on which all border states can collaborate? If so, what are those challenges and how can all border states collaborate to overcome them?

N/A

(11) Has your agency developed any recommendations to address border challenges in general? If so, what are they?

One of the goals of the Border Energy Forum is to provide a neutral ground or “think tank” for addressing challenges related to this important area on a steady, continuing basis.

(12) What programs and services does your agency offer to border communities?

Virtually all GLO and Veterans Land Board are available throughout Texas, whether they be VLB loan programs or management of land assets. Adopt-a-Beach, for example, is promoted throughout the state because all Texans benefit from preservation of the Texas coast.

(13) What are some regulatory and/or legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine programs and services?

N/A

(14) Please share any considerations from your agency regarding the effect of policies instituted by the federal government impacting the border region.

N/A

(15) Please give a brief summary of all your agency’s activities related to the Border and/or Mexico.

The agency has organized and sponsored a Border Energy Forum annually since 1994 to improve information exchange and regional planning on energy issues, as they relate to the environment and economic development. The Land Office also has a border energy showcase project under way, working under a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to demonstrate the viability of renewable energy in border infrastructure projects. It has developed a bilingual, binational education campaign to promote sustainable energy regionally.

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