

BORDER ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION COMMISSION

Resource Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Appropriations	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Enacted	FY 2011 Request	Increase / Decrease
Funds	2,120	2,249	2,302	53

Program Description

The Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADB) are international organizations created by the Governments of the United States and Mexico under a side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement, in order to help address the environmental infrastructure needs in the border region between both countries. The *“Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States Concerning the Establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission and a North American Development Bank”* (the BECC/NADB Charter), was executed in 1993 and amended through Protocol of Amendment signed on November 25 and 26, 2002, which entered into effect on August 6, 2004. The BECC, a U.S.-Mexico bi-national institution is located in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

The mission of the Border Environment Cooperative Commission (BECC) is to work to preserve, protect, and enhance human health and the environment of the U. S.-Mexico border region, by strengthening cooperation among interested parties and supporting sustainable projects through a transparent bi-national process in close coordination with the NADB (North American Development Bank), federal, State, local agencies, the private sector, and civil society. BECC was created to assist border communities in developing environmental infrastructure projects to meet certification requirements to be eligible to receive funding from the NADB, or other institutions. The goal of BECC’s certification requirements is to ensure that projects provide environmental and human-health benefits are technically feasible and affordable, and are capable of being operated over the long term, while ensuring transparency and public participation. BECC is authorized to work on the US-Mexico Border up to 100 km north on the U.S. side and 300 km south on the Mexican side.

In order to carry out its purpose, the BECC/NADB Charter grants the BECC the following functions:

- With their concurrence, assist States and localities and other public entities and private investors in: coordinating, preparing, developing, implementing and overseeing environmental infrastructure projects in the border region, including the design, siting and other technical aspects; analyzing the financial feasibility or the environmental aspects of the environmental infrastructure projects; evaluating social and economic benefits of the projects; and organizing, developing and arranging public and private financing for environmental infrastructure projects in the border region; and
- Certify, by a decision of its Board of Directors, environmental infrastructure projects in the border region to be submitted for financing to the NADB, or to other sources of financing that request such certification.

The BECC/NADB Charter defines an environmental infrastructure project as a project that will “prevent, control or reduce environmental pollutants or contaminants, improve the drinking water supply, or protect flora and fauna so as to improve human health, promote sustainable development, or contribute to a higher quality of life”. Based on this definition, the specific sectors that BECC and NADB currently address are the following:

- Water Pollution
- Wastewater Treatment
- Industrial and Hazardous Waste
- Domestic hook-ups to Water and

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- Municipal Solid Waste
- Water Conservation
- Wastewater Systems
- Recycling and Waste Reduction

* The sectors listed above are given priority by the BECC/NADB Charter

- Air Quality
- Clean and Efficient Energy
- Public Transportation
- Municipal Planning and Development, including Water Management

Technical Assistance

BECC assists border communities in the development and certification of high priority environmental infrastructure projects by providing technical assistance services such as engineering analysis, project development and design, financial feasibility studies, community participation, environmental assessment, and sustainable development. In addition to providing project development expertise, the BECC mobilizes the resources from U.S. and Mexican environmental agencies and other sources, and provides access to the financial resources of the NADB or other funding sources requiring such certification.

The BECC assists the U.S.-Mexico border's neediest communities that without this assistance would otherwise be incapable of obtaining financial resources, by providing grant funding for planning, development, and design of necessary, complex environmental infrastructure projects. BECC commits resources that enable border communities to undertake initial project development activities and also facilitates subsequent detailed technical work necessary to formulate high quality projects that can meet the intent of the certification process.

The Technical Assistance and Project Certification offers technical services and/or financial assistance to help project sponsors effectively implement high-quality project development efforts and achieve certification for critical environmental infrastructure projects.

The Environmental Project Management Program uses BECC's leadership and institutional capacities to create an opportunity to enhance coordination among stakeholders and strengthen regional commitment to environmental activities, resulting in greater efficiencies and effectiveness for the project beneficiaries and related programs.

The Strategic Planning Program identifies needs, develop/prioritize solutions, and optimize resources to achieve local, state and regional environmental and human health goals. This program includes environmental infrastructure planning by region and by sector, as well as strategy development and project management for some project types in new sectors, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy. As a related function, this program also encompasses the implementation of the results measurement system for projects, specifically for post-implementation review and monitoring tasks, including activities such as the recently initiated project close-out process.

Performance Improvement identifies, develops, and implements institutional improvements to optimize its human and financial resources, enhancing its capacity to achieve high-quality products and services. In addition the General Support activity provides responsive and high quality services important to the daily operations of the BECC.

Public Involvement and Public Outreach Process

Public Participation and Capacity Building Program are key programs that provide a foundation for sustainable development along the border. These efforts are intended to inspire community-based support for projects, providing transparency in each border initiative and strengthening the institutional capacity of border communities and utility providers.

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One of the BECC's greatest successes is its public-participation requirement. Public-participation activities are required to ensure broad community support for projects that are being considered for certification. The establishment of active, local steering committees is a key element of this process that provides transparency and access to project information, the involvement of local organizations in the decision-making process, and the presentation of projects in public forums for discussion.

Municipal Strategic Planning

BECC's Municipal Planning Initiative will be directed to assist local governments along the U.S.-Mexico border in the development of planning efforts designed to guide the sustainable management of community and regional resources. The strategic content of the new planning tool will help form policy direction, appropriate mitigation and adaptation schemes, program investment requirements and implementation timelines necessary to support a sustainable community that delivers a high quality of life.

Justification of Request

For FY 2011, the BECC is requesting a total of \$2.302 million for its operating budget. This level will allow the BECC to continue supporting the Department of State in achieving its strategic goal of improving health and environmental conditions in the U.S.-Mexico border region. The BECC's requested increase is \$53,000 above the FY2010 estimate. The U.S. portion of the increase in BECC's budget for FY2011 will be utilized for costs of living increases.

Funds by Program Activity (\$ in thousands)

	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Enacted	FY 2011 Request	Increase / Decrease
Public Involvement and Public Outreach Process	75	75	75	0
Technical Assistance Program	2,045	2,174	2,227	53
Total	2,120	2,249	2,302	53

Funds by Object Class (\$ in thousands)

	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Enacted	FY 2011 Request	Increase / Decrease
1100 Personnel Compensation	1,157	1,128	1,169	41
1200 Personnel Benefits	386	282	302	20
2100 Travel & Trans of Persons	83	70	70	0
2300 Rents, Comm & Utilities	187	160	160	0
2500 Other Services	208	524	516	(8)
2600 Supplies and Materials	74	85	85	0
3100 Personal Property	25	0	0	0
Total	2,120	2,249	2,302	53