



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

March 28, 2013

Ing. Arturo Rodriguez Abítia
Deputy Attorney General for Industrial Inspection
Office of the Federal Attorney General
for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA)
Camino al Ajusco, no. 20, Piso 5, Ala Sur
Col. Jardines en al Montana, De. Tlalpan
C.P. 14210, México, D.F.

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Lic. Ricardo de la Cruz Musalem
General Director for Civil Protection
Secretaria de Gobernación
Av. Paseo de la Reforma No. 99, Nivel Mezanine,
Col. Tabacalera, Delegación Cuauhtémoc
C.P. 06030, México, D.F.

Via email

Dear Ing. Rodriguez Abítia and Lic. de la Cruz Musalem:

As you may already know, two smoke stacks at the ASARCO facility in El Paso, Texas will be demolished soon via a controlled implosion. As the United States Co-Chair for the Emergency Preparedness and Response Border-wide Workgroup, I am writing to you to advise you of this event.

The implosion is scheduled for Saturday, April 13, 2013. This action will bring down the two stacks within a defined exclusion zone in a matter of seconds. Similar procedures have been used successfully to bring down smelter stacks throughout the United States (U.S.) safely. Estimates of anticipated dust impacts and contaminant dispersion conducted by contractors indicate that there is no expectation of harmful impacts to Mexico. This work is being carried out by the contractor for the Trustee managing the ASARCO bankruptcy and facility closure. Primary oversight is being provided by the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ), who will be working closely with local El Paso emergency planning officials and coordinating with local Mexican officials in Ciudad Juarez. The city of El Paso shares a local contingency plan with the city of Ciudad Juarez, in Mexico.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also reviewing the demolition plans. No special environmental permits or licenses are required by state or federal laws; however, both U.S and Mexico work together on Annex II of the La Paz Agreement for border environmental cooperation. Annex II provides for the Mexico-U.S. Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) on preparedness and response to hazardous chemical substances as well as an U.S.-Mexico Joint Response Team. Appendix A of the JCP is constantly exercised and updated to reflect changes in protocol and technology. In the event of an emergency, the binational notification system can be activated.

Along with this letter, my U.S. Border 2020 Program counterparts have also been sharing information and expertise, on the scheduled implosion, with their respective Mexican counterparts. You may have access to several documents, materials in addition to frequently asked questions, which were prepared for this event at the following URL: http://www.recastingthesmelter.com/?page_id=86. Furthermore, please feel free to contact Ms. Beatriz Oliveira, of my staff, at 202-564-2080, for more information.

I hope that we have a chance to meet soon, perhaps, during the next U.S.-Mexico National Coordinators Meeting, scheduled for next year.

Sincerely,

 s/n D. Tulis

Dana S. Tulis, Deputy Director
Office of Emergency Management

cc: Lic. Francisco Moreno Merino, Attorney General, PROFEPA
Lic. Luis Felipe Puente, General Coordinator of Civil Protection
Ing. Enrique Ortiz, Director for Emergencies, COATEA
Lisa Almodovar, U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 Senior Coordinator, OITA