



For Immediate Release  
May 29, 2008

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## **Governor Bill Richardson Announces Results from Border Governor Meetings with Mexican President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa**

SANTA FE –Governor Bill Richardson reported results from the Border Governor’s meetings with Mexican President Calderón Hinojosa and Mexican federal authorities today. Governor Richardson also met privately with the Mexican President.

Governor Richardson and President Calderón spoke about the proposed new rail route to go around Ciudad Juarez and cross the border at Santa Teresa. This same rail route was outlined in an official presentation by Secretary of Communications and Transportation Luis Téllez of the state infrastructure development program. Governor Richardson had proposed this new rail route in earlier meetings with President Calderon.

“We welcome President Calderón’s plan to build this new freight rail route through Santa Teresa,” stated Governor Richardson. “I’m confident this new route will help spur our border economy.”

In a plenary session with governors from six Mexican states and three US states, Governor Richardson called for the following:

- Border Governors and their staff must look at ways to institutionalize a formal, permanent, joint presence of local, state and federal agencies at the border to deal with border violence.
- The problem of illegal immigrant children deserves more attention, especially in cases when they are separated from their parents. Governor Richardson also complimented the efforts to help these children led by the first lady of the state of Sonora, Mexico.
- Governor Richardson also publicly supported the Merida Initiative, a State Department proposal to provide equipment and training to assist law enforcement operations to the governments of Central America and Mexico. According to the State Department this regional effort “complements US domestic efforts to reduce

drug demand, stop the flow of arms and weapons, and confront gangs and criminal organizations.”

During the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference in September 2007, the Borders Governors resolved to call on US and Mexican federal authorities to urge them to make border issues a policy priority. Today, nine border governors presented priority issues to Mexican President Calderón, including border security and immigration, mutual response to natural disasters, compliance with international agreements and treaties governing bi-national watersheds, fostering border competitiveness, and creating a renewable energy infrastructure fund.

At the end of the meeting, all nine governors approved a joint declaration that urged the following:

- The governors urged the development of a strategy to reduce the violence along the border through better cooperation of federal, state and local security agencies. The declaration cites New Mexico’s coordination of federal, state and local agencies could serve as a national model.
- The governors urged the creation or expansion of a regional fund for the economic development of the border region. The fund would promote scientific development, technology and the knowledge economy. It would address infrastructure necessities along the border, and would seek to eradicate poverty along the border.
- The governors urged the implementation of a master plan for the US-Mexican border similar to the Master plan under development between Baja California and California to reduce the waiting time by 50% and logistical costs by 33% by 2013.
- The governors urged the formulation of agreements that establish procedures for the mutual cooperation in the case of natural disasters.

Three US border state governors attended including Governor Bill Richardson (New Mexico), Governor Rick Perry (Texas), Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (California). All six Mexican border state governors also attended, including Governor Jose Reyes Baeza (Chihuahua), Governor José Guadalupe Osuna Millán (Baja California), Governor Eduardo Bours Castelo (Sonora), Governor Humberto Moreira Valdes (Coahuila), Governor Eugenio Hernandez Flores (Tamaulipas), and Governor Jose Natividad Gonzales Paras, (Nuevo Leon).

**Attached:**

Photo 1: Governor Richardson with Mexican President Calderón Hinojosa

Photo 2: Governor Richardson with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Mexican President Calderón Hinojosa