

JOINT RESOLUTION OF BORDER CITIES

WHEREAS, in 1971 an El Paso investigation found that in one year ASARCO spewed 1,012 tons of lead, 508 tons of zinc, 11 tons of cadmium, and 1 ton of arsenic into our border region;

WHEREAS, in the City of El Paso 1,097 residential homes have been found with lead contamination exceeding 500 parts per million, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found ASARCO to be the potential responsible party;

WHEREAS, according to a 1998 EPA memorandum, ASARCO violated its permit in the past by illegal treatment and disposal of more than 5,000 tons of hazardous waste, thereby posing other health risk to our border region;

WHEREAS, according to ASARCO's permit application, a re-activated ASARCO will admit nearly 7,000 tons of pollutants into El Paso's, Ciudad Juárez's, and Sunland Park, New Mexico's environmental air shed;

WHEREAS, said pollutants will include 7.69 tons of lead, 230 tons of oxides of nitrogen, 287 tons of carbon monoxide, 7.66 tons of volatile organic compounds, 6,673 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 16.21 tons of sulfuric acid;

WHEREAS, El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and Sunland Park, New Mexico, would also face other air quality concerns if ASARCO is reopened, including elevated levels of airborne particulate matter and ground-level ozone pollution, which will negatively effect our environment;

WHEREAS, for over a century, residents of El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and Sunland Park, New Mexico, have been exposed to high levels of air pollutants, contaminated soil, and a contaminated Rio Grande river, which has resulted in the development of serious health conditions;

WHEREAS, the ASARCO plant located in El Paso is less than a mile from the borders of Mexico and New Mexico and has posed a transborder health concern for over a century and continues to pose a health concern because of the contaminated soil that remains in all three of our border cities;

WHEREAS, lead, arsenic, and cadmium are toxic to humans and are responsible for very serious health issues, including nerve disorders, reproductive problems, and cancer, and that these substances are especially harmful to children, affecting their physical and mental development;

WHEREAS, children with blood lead levels above 10 micrograms per deciliter have demonstrated severe and permanent injury to brain and neurological functions that include learning disabilities, decreased growth, hyperactivity, and impaired hearing; and that such high levels of lead has been found in a large number of children living in the surrounding area of ASARCO;

WHEREAS, human exposure to arsenic and cadmium creates a lifetime cancer risk, since both contaminants are carcinogenic;

WHEREAS, it is well known that serious medical conditions require medical care and treatment, which results in thousands of dollars in related health-care costs that are borne by the individual and the community;

WHEREAS, a dirty industry such as ASARCO, with its 828-foot and 615-foot smokestacks, jeopardizes economic development because clean businesses do not want to invest or move into our communities, thereby negatively affecting future jobs and the long-term growth of our communities' tax bases;

WHEREAS, ASARCO is a polluting vestige of a 19th-century environmentally negligent industry that detract from the development of tourism throughout this border region;

WHEREAS, the EPA has been using Superfund money to remove contaminated soil from some of the affluent residences near the smelter, the contamination problem has yet to be addressed in the poor areas of El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and Sunland Park, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the City of El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and Sunland Park, New Mexico, are firmly committed to attracting clean 21st century industries that are mindful and respectful of our region, health, and environment.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO, THE CITY COUNCIL OF CIUDAD JUÁREZ, AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNLAND PARK, NEW MEXICO:

That the City of El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and the City of Sunland Park, New Mexico, and their duly elected Mayors and Representatives, oppose the renewal of the air permit that would allow the reopening of ASARCO in El Paso, and find that it would be detrimental to our border communities' environment, health, and economic prosperity.

ADOPTED this 31st day of May 2007.

[SIGNATURES BEGIN ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

THE CITY OF EL PASO

John F. Cook
Mayor

ATTEST:

Richarda Duffy Momsen
City Clerk

ATTEST:

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Sylvia Borunda Firth
Senior Assistant City Attorney

CIUDAD JUÁREZ

Héctor Murguía Lardizábal
Mayor

**THE CITY OF SUNLAND PARK,
NEW MEXICO**

J. Rubén Segura
Mayor