

FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (SEMARNAT) MEXICO

THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER region spans deserts, mountain ranges, rivers, wetlands, estuaries and aquifers that are shared, various climatic zones and a notable biodiversity that includes endemic species, national parks and protected areas. We are able to find, amongst many other species, cacti in arid regions, like the sahuaro, and unique animal species of the world threatened or under risk of extinction, like the pronghorn antelope, big-horn sheep, the Mexican gray wolf, the black bear, the jaguar, the mountain lion and the ocelote, among others.

Having this heritage as a backdrop, the construction of barriers between both countries is cause for concern due to its impact on the shared natural capital. Faced with the absence of scientific information with respect to the project's environmental impact, and in response to concerns posed by civil society, on May 3rd and 4th of 2007, and behind the initiative of the Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), a technical-scientific workshop on the potential environmental impacts of the border fence between the United States and Mexico was held. In the campus of El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 55 recognized experts from both countries and from the governmental, academic, and non-governmental sectors were convened to identify and discuss the possible outcomes of the building of the fence, with the purpose of providing technical environmental elements for the bilateral discussion and decision making on the subject.

Based on deliberations resulting from the workshop, *A Barrier to our Shared Environment. The United States-Mexico Border Fence* collects the analyses and alternatives to the potential impacts that could stem from the construction of the fence in the region over flora, fauna, and the environment of this important binational strip of land.

The quality of the expert participants in this work makes it a solid reference for a binational and informed dialogue, impregnated with the spirit of cooperation for the sustainable development endorsed by Mexico and the United States.

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