



Bill Richardson
Governor

**NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

Office of the Secretary

Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



Ron Curry
Secretary
Jon Goldstein
Deputy Secretary

March 14, 2008
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone, Environment Department Communications Director
Phone: (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

Environment Department Names New Border/Environmental Justice Liaison

(Santa Fe, NM) New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry named Tom Ruiz as the department's new Border/Environmental Justice Liaison.

Ruiz, who will be based in the border region in Las Cruces, has worked for the department's Air Quality Bureau since 2006. He also worked for the Department of Health's Office of Border Health from 2002 to 2006.

"Tom brings substantive knowledge of New Mexico border communities to this position and has worked closely with many border authorities in New Mexico, Texas and Mexico," Secretary Curry said. "He will help integrate the environmental and health issues that are key to moving forward in the area of environmental justice. Tom is a fluent Spanish speaker and is well regarded in the border communities."

Ruiz has a Master of Science Degree from New Mexico State University and a Bachelor of Science Degree from Purdue University. As an associate college assistant professor at NMSU's College of Health and Social Services since 2004, he also instructs an undergraduate and graduate course on Environmental Epidemiology. He was also a college associate professor at Dona Ana Branch Community College in 2005.

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission recognized Ruiz as a "Border Hero" in July 2006 for being instrumental in the development and support of air quality research along the U.S.-Mexico border. That research focused on rural communities and involved border health.

Ruiz, who will assume a position formerly held by Gedi Cibas, will begin his new job March 24.

He will become the department's main point of contact for border issues, including the Border 2012 and 10 States projects. The U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program, Border 2012 is a collaboration between the United States and Mexico to improve the environment and protect the health of the nearly 12 million people living along the border (<http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/>). The binational program focuses on cleaning the air, providing safe drinking water, reducing the risk of exposure to hazardous waste, and ensuring emergency preparedness along the U.S.-Mexico border.

For more information, call Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314.

###