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SENATOR DURAZO TO LEAD BI-PARTISAN DELEGATION TO MEXICO

***California Group to Bolster California-Mexico Relationship;
Examine Water and Cross-Border Pollution, Forestry Management,
Energy Partnerships***

SACRAMENTO – This week, Senator Maria Elena Durazo (D – Los Angeles) will lead a bi-partisan delegation to Mexico to survey the extensive social and economic ties between California and Mexico. The delegation will consider areas for collaboration relating to water and cross-border pollution, forestry management, and sustainable energy planning.

The research tour is organized by the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy (CFEE), and the delegation is made up of state legislators, environmental and labor leaders, business executives, and public policy experts. No taxpayer funds are used.

“California and Mexico share deep historical and cultural roots,” said Sen. Durazo. “As always, we need to embrace these enduring connections and consider opportunities to strengthen our essential relationship.”

Sen. Durazo is the daughter of Mexican immigrant farm workers and uniquely understands the special bond between California and Mexico. The senator is a respected labor leader, organizing Latino and other California workers prior to becoming a State Senator. She is the current vice-chair of the Latino Caucus.

“Mexico is one of our closest partners,” said CFEE President & CEO Jay Hansen. “We share the busiest border in the world, and bi-lateral trade amounts to billions of dollars every year that generate an estimated 566,000 jobs in California. It’s always important to reinforce our relationship by understanding where we are and exploring areas for additional partnership.”

The tour will begin in Baja California, where untreated water from the Tijuana River periodically contaminates the California coastline, closing down beaches and shuttering businesses for days on end. The group will meet with leaders on both sides of the border and assess how federal and state agencies, local governments, and non-governmental organizations are working to address the problem.

Hansen said, “Communal problems require coordinated responses. We look forward to learning what collaborative actions must be taken to prevent pollution from damaging sensitive ecosystems and local economies.”

The CFEE Study Travel Project, conducted October 21 – 30, will consist of meetings with elected and appointed officials and environmental, labor, business, and community leaders, as well as site visits and demonstrations.

The delegation will visit the Yucatán Peninsula to learn how Mexican authorities are encouraging climate-smart land use decisions to preserve forests and sequester carbon dioxide (CO₂). Mexico is supporting “carbon offset” projects by enabling local communities to receive compensation for protecting jungles that absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere.

“We’re interested in seeing how Mexico is empowering local indigenous populations to manage precious forests that are the front lines in the climate change battle,” said Durazo. “With the Amazon Rainforest under threat in Brazil, it will be heartening to see firsthand how Mexican authorities and community leaders are safeguarding natural resources that remain threatened by the specter of commercialization.”

Hansen added, “With the adoption of the Tropical Forestry Standard by the California Air Resources Board, this is a key moment for understanding how California’s climate initiatives can work in concert with other jurisdictions to reduce global carbon emissions.”

The group will also meet with senior energy executives in Mexico City to understand how President López Obrador is seeking to secure a sustainable energy future for Mexico and how California energy companies and environmental organizations may partner with his administration.

“This Study Tour is an important opportunity to advance California-Mexico relations,” Hansen said. “We’re excited to learn from Mexico and to find new ways to foster neighborly partnerships that can provide environmental, economic, and community benefits for Californians and Mexicans.”

The group will also sit down with Mexico City leaders to share best practices in delivering clean drinking water, building affordable housing, and providing convenient and safe transportation services.

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An independent, nonpartisan, 501(c)3, the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy has convened state leaders for more than three decades to examine critical issues related to California’s environment, with a view toward building consensus around long-term solutions. CFEE’s bipartisan forums and study travel projects put a diverse cross-section of California leadership into direct contact with their counterparts around the world. This sharing of views and experiences leads to a broader understanding of complex issues and encourages the exchange of policy and technology ideas while also promoting what makes California special.