

**2021**

Annual Report

# **The California-Mexico Border Relations Council**

A Summary of Activities Undertaken in 2021



Published in November 2022







## **Council Member Agencies:**

California Environmental Protection Agency  
California Health and Human Services Agency  
California Natural Resources Agency  
California State Transportation Agency  
California Department of Food and Agriculture  
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency  
California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (ex-officio)

**Gavin Newsom**  
*Governor*

**Yana Garcia**  
*Secretary for Environmental Protection*



**The California-Mexico Border Relations Council is the central organizational body that coordinates interagency projects, programs, initiatives, and partnerships along the California-Mexico border. It also serves as a representative body of the State of California whose goal is to continue to develop and enhance cross-border relations between California and Mexico.**

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# Welcome

## Dear Honorable Members of the Legislature,

As the interconnected border region of California and Mexico continues to face unprecedented challenges, our collaboration has never been more important. From COVID-19 response to improving the environment and enhancing infrastructure, our long-term binational collaboration continued to benefit border communities and our state and federal entities as a whole in 2021. Border affairs initiatives and relationships are a top priority for me as California's new Secretary for Environmental Protection, and I look forward to continuing to build on our vital collaborative efforts.



In 2021, the California-Mexico Border Relations Council made broad strides:

- Trade initiatives were developed with Mexico, and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development led a virtual outbound trade mission to Baja California and virtual exchanges to promote bilateral trade and investment.
- \$47 million was invested in Imperial and San Diego counties to create 420 affordable housing units, and \$30 million was invested to upgrade 24 migrant housing centers for 11,000 farmworkers and families.
- First-time funds were provided to address cross-border water quality through Senate Bill 170 (Statutes of 2021) and executed by CalEPA and the State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards.
- The California Department of Food and Agriculture continued partnering with Mexico to address pests of mutual concern.
- Cross-border transportation investments were made to open the 21st century Otay Mesa East/Mesa de Otay II Port of Entry by the end of 2024. California's international inbound border crossings processed more than 10.6 million pedestrian crossings, more than 25.5 million personal vehicles, and over 1.4 million commercial trucks.
- The Office of Binational Border Health worked closely with local health jurisdictions and stakeholders to jointly address COVID-19 and provide vaccines on both sides of the border.
- Cal OES donated over 4 million pieces of PPE, including masks, gowns, and sanitizers, and 6,000 thermal blankets, to various NGOs, clinics, and other humanitarian organizations in Baja California.

As this 2021 report illustrates, the California-Mexico Border Relations Council remains a crucial forum for addressing these matters. Pursuant to Assembly Bill 3021 (Statutes of 2006), I would like to present this annual report of the California-Mexico Border Relations Council. We eagerly anticipate our continued collaboration as we work to accomplish so much more, together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Yana Garcia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Yana Garcia  
Secretary for Environmental Protection  
Chair, California-Mexico Border Relations Council



# Council Background

The California-Mexico border region has long-standing interconnectedness and interdependency. Both the U.S. and Mexico face challenges at the border resulting from rapid population growth, urbanization, industrial expansion, and increasing flows of international trade. In order to begin addressing these issues, legislation enacted in 1982 established the Office of California-Mexico Affairs within the California Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency. However, Assembly Bill 1757 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 229, Statutes of 2003) ended the agency in 2003, and the duties of the agency were reassigned to other state entities. In 2004, the California Research Bureau released a report that listed more than 100 California-Mexico programs were operating across state agencies, with no organizing entity to coordinate interagency cooperation. The report was updated in 2017 and shows continued engagement with Mexico (the report can be found on the California State Library website: [Programs and Projects Related to Mexico in California State Government](#)). In 2006, Assembly Bill 3021 (Núñez, Chapter 621, Statutes of 2006; Government Code Sections 8710- 8713) was enacted to fill the need for statewide oversight and coordination of multi-agency involvement with Mexico. It created the California-Mexico Border Relations Council, which serves as the central organizing body that coordinates cross-border programs,

initiatives, projects and partnerships. The council is comprised of the leaders of eight state entities, with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency serving in an ex-officio capacity. Collectively these entities are responsible for addressing a wide range of issues affecting the border relating to the environment, natural resources, transportation, human health, food and agriculture, emergency and consumer services, housing, and business and economic development.

The council meets at least once a year to coordinate the activities of state agencies on California-Mexico border issues. In 2014, responsibilities of the council were modified by Assembly Bill 690 (Campos, Chapter 716, Statutes of 2014). The bill created Government Code Sections 99520-99524, which direct the actions of the council today.

The council is legislatively mandated to:

- Coordinate activities of state agencies that are related to cross-border programs, initiatives, projects, and partnerships that exist within state government, to improve the effectiveness of state and local efforts that are of concern between California and Mexico.
- Invite representatives of the State of Baja California and the Mexican government to participate in meetings.
- Establish policies to coordinate the collection and sharing of data related to cross-border issues among agencies.
- Establish the Border Region Solid Waste Working Group to develop and coordinate long-term solutions to address and remediate problems associated with waste tires, solid waste, and excessive sedimentation along the border that cause the

degradation of valuable estuarine and riparian habitats, and that threaten water quality and public health in the state.

- Identify and recommend to the Legislature changes in law needed to achieve the goals of Section 99523.
- Submit a report to the Legislature on the council's activities annually.

# Council Members



## Chair

### Yana Garcia

Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)

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### Wade Crowfoot

Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)

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### Mark Ghaly

Secretary, California Department of Health and Human Services (CHHS)

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### Mark Ghilarducci

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### Toks Omishakin

Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)

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### Lourdes M. Castro Ramirez

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### Dee Dee Myers

Director, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)

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### Karen Ross

Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

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### Martha Guzman

Regional Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) - Ex-officio

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# Executive Summary

The California-Mexico Border Relations Council serves as the central organizing body within California state government for California-Mexico border matters. This annual report to the Legislature, which is the required pursuant to Government Code section 99524, includes a summary of activities and milestones in the calendar year of 2021.

## Trade

In 2021, Mexico remained the number one trade destination for California exports and the State's number two overall trade partner. California's top exports to Mexico in 2021 include computer and electronic products, transportation equipment, and machinery. Nearly 10 percent of all U.S. exports to Mexico come directly from California. Reciprocally, California was the destination for approximately 15 percent of all 2021 U.S. imports from Mexico. The forming of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in 2020 has enhanced trade relationships and created opportunities for stronger commercial ties between California and Mexico. In 2021, GO-Biz facilitated various trade initiatives with Mexico, including a virtual outbound trade mission to Baja California, individual export assistance to California small businesses, and virtual exchanges to promote bilateral trade and investment.

## Business, Consumer Services and Housing

The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) is responsible for fostering an equitable and inclusive California by coordinating and promoting alignment across departments to guard civil rights, license professionals, protect consumers, prevent and end homelessness, and create and preserve affordable housing for all Californians. For example, the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program provided financial assistance for unpaid rent and utilities to low-income renters and landlords who had been impacted by the pandemic. In 2021, Imperial County served 853 Households totaling over \$4.6 million and with an additional \$91 million allocated for San Diego City and County.

## Environment

Various boards, departments, and offices within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and California Natural Resources Agency (CRNA), as well as U.S. EPA, have made significant strides in the border region to improve air and water quality. With state investments in the cross-border New and Tijuana Rivers, Salton Sea, border-region parks, and cross-border air monitors, 2021 saw unprecedented first-time state investments in the millions of dollars in the border region.

## **Agriculture**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) continued engagement and collaboration with border counterparts on a wide variety of agricultural issues and participated in the Tri-National Agricultural Accord. Throughout 2021, CalEPA's Department of Pesticide Regulation carried out functions including important worker safety and community outreach in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. Activities included working with civil rights groups, promotores (community health workers), and Mexican consulates throughout California, as well as the community members they serve in border regions and throughout the state.

## **Transportation**

In 2021, California's international inbound border crossings processed more than 10.6 million pedestrian crossings, 25.5 million personal vehicles, and over 1.4 million commercial trucks. In June 2021, governmental agencies from both California and Mexico signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to open the 21st century Otay Mesa East/ Mesa de Otay II Port of Entry by late 2024, reinforcing the agencies' mutual commitment to support this project. In 2021, California's international inbound border crossings processed more than 10.6 million pedestrian crossings, more than 25.5 million personal vehicles, and over 1.4 million commercial trucks.

## **Safety**

Border safety issues continued to be addressed largely through the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program (OSPG), Operation Gridlock, the California Highway Patrol Border Division and the California Maritime Security Program.

For example, Imperial County law enforcement agencies acquired a regional automated license plate reader program and continued upgrading and expanding the system during 2021. The system enhances the ability of officers to identify wanted criminals and stolen vehicles across the border.

## **Health**

In 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continued promoting wellness and health equity by collaborating with local stakeholders and monitoring binational infectious disease cases. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other infectious diseases, the CDPH Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH) worked closely with local health jurisdictions and stakeholders on binational notifications and surveillance activities, utilizing binational U.S.-Mexico protocols to streamline communication, and providing vaccines to Baja California.

## **Emergency Management**

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) continues to support key initiatives and partnerships with Mexico. Through these partnerships, California and Mexico take a joint, proactive approach to addressing shared risks, threats, and vulnerabilities. For example, Cal OES donated 4 million pieces of PPE to Baja California and established the Unified Border Coordination Group to provide humanitarian assistance to the asylum-seeking migrant population along the California-Mexico border.

## **Trade**

### **Cross-Border Economic Ties**

The California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) is the state's leader for job

creation and economic development. In close partnership with Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis, the state's designated lead on international trade, the International Affairs and Trade team at GO-Biz supports economic development by promoting California exports, attracting foreign investment, and maintaining and developing California's global partnerships. Ongoing engagement with Mexico is significant in each of these areas. Although the coronavirus pandemic has continued to create unique challenges for international work, the state has maintained its important collaboration with one of our most significant trade partners.

# Trade

Mexico remains the number one destination for California exports and number two overall trade partner. Nearly 10 percent of all U.S. exports to Mexico are from California. California’s top exports to Mexico include computer and electronic products, transportation equipment, machinery, and chemicals. California’s top imports from Mexico are computer and electronic products and transportation equipment. California is the destination for nearly 15 percent of U.S. imports from Mexico.

(Billions of Dollars)	2020	2021	% Change
U.S Exports to Mexico	212.67	276.45	+29.9%
CA Exports to Mexico	24.08	27.23	+13.0%
U.S. Imports from Mexico	325.39	384.70	+18.2%
CA Imports from Mexico	47.91	57.66	+20.3%
U.S. Total Trade with Mexico	536.69	661.16	+23.1%
CA Total Trade with Mexico	71.93	84.89	+18.0%

Source: USA Trade Online – U.S. Census Bureau. State Exports by North American Industry Classification System.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) came into force in July 2020, enhancing trade relationships in North America and creating opportunities for even stronger commercial ties between California and Mexico. In 2021, GO-Biz facilitated various trade initiatives with Mexico, including a virtual outbound trade mission to Baja California, individual export assistance to California small businesses, and virtual exchanges to promote bilateral trade and investment.

In 2021, GO-Biz continued to utilize California State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) funding to support small businesses in their market expansion to Mexico, which included cross-border e-commerce enhancement and virtual trade mission participation. GO-Biz hosted a virtual trade mission to Baja California in May 2021 as part of the California Global Connect Trade Missions initiative supported by STEP funding. The trade mission to Baja California highlighted opportunities for California exporters in the information technology (IT), electronics, and aerospace sectors. California STEP is funded in part through a grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration and was administered in partnership with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and California State University San Bernardino.

California maintains a trade desk in Mexico City through a partnership with the University of California’s Casa de la Universidad de California in Mexico as a means of promoting two-way trade and further strengthening California’s deep economic, political, and cultural relationship with Mexico. The desk is utilized by California’s Trade and Investment Representative for the Americas to promote mutual trade and investment.

## Foreign Investment

Mexico is ranked as California's 13th highest source of foreign investment based on jobs supported, with 13,400 California jobs supported by 472 Mexican owned businesses (World Trade Center of Los Angeles [2021 Report on Foreign Investment in California](#)). Mexican investment falls into several strategic sectors in California, including manufacturing, professional services, and retail trade. Geographically, jobs supported by Mexican-owned businesses span the state, including greater Los Angeles, San Diego/Imperial Counties, the Bay Area, and the greater Sacramento region. GO-Biz International worked closely with the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City to support Mexican businesses looking to expand in California. This included helping Mexican companies navigate regulatory requirements and incentives and making introductions to local partners statewide.

## International Engagement

Although in-person travel was still restricted for much of 2021 due to the pandemic, California maintained open lines of communication with Mexico and supported several meaningful virtual and in-person engagements. The Lieutenant Governor maintained and enhanced California's close ties with Mexico through high-level diplomatic engagement at the gubernatorial and consul general levels. This included signing a memorandum of understanding regarding the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry with the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Director General for North America, speaking with the Governor of Baja California Sur, meetings with the Governors-Elect of Nuevo Leon and Baja California, various Consuls General of Mexico, and providing

virtual opening remarks for the December Council meeting.

## Commissions of the Californias (ComCal)

The [Commission of the Californias](#) (ComCal), revived on December 4, 2019, is a forum for the governments of California, Baja California North, and Baja California South to share information about common areas of interest, including energy and the environment, transportation and infrastructure, emergency preparedness and response, economic development, agriculture, and public health. Along with the staffs of the newly elected Governors of Baja and Baja Sur as of November 2021, GO-Biz international has re-engaged to review the working groups and revisit priority areas. ComCal will reconvene in 2022 to bring together working groups discussions in the following areas (1) Environment and Energy; (2) Transportation and Infrastructure; (3) Emergency Preparedness and Response; (4) Economic Development and Tourism; (5) Agriculture; (6) Public Health.

## Business, Consumer Services and Housing

The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) is responsible for fostering an equitable and inclusive California by protecting consumers, upholding civil rights, and ensuring that all Californians have safe, stable, and dignified places to call home. Departments within BCSH continue to support border communities with a focus on providing funding to preserve and expand housing and consumer protections, and to safeguard civil rights.



## **Expanding Housing Options and Affordability**

In 2021, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) led several efforts to keep people housed and expand housing options. The California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program provided financial assistance for unpaid rent and utilities to low-income renters and landlords who had been impacted by the pandemic. Income-eligible Californians could apply for assistance regardless of immigration status and were not required to show proof of citizenship. In 2021, Imperial County served 853 Households totaling over \$4.6 million, with an additional \$91 million allocated for San Diego City and County.

HCD also implemented Homekey, a program that allows local public agencies to be awarded funding to purchase and rehabilitate housing, hotels, motels, vacant apartment buildings, and other buildings in their communities and convert them into interim or permanent, long-term housing for people experiencing or who are at-risk of homelessness. In the first round of Homekey, Imperial County and San Diego combined received nearly \$47 million dollars to create more than 420 units, or homes, to address homelessness.

HCD also announced a \$30 million investment to upgrade the state's 24 migrant housing centers, thus creating more welcoming spaces for upwards of 11,000 farmworkers and their families. Improvements include adding broadband internet, renovating apartments and community spaces, adding and improving playgrounds and tot lots, and upgrading old infrastructures. Migrant housing centers also include essential onsite services like children's education, health education, and foodbanks.

## **Consumer Protections**

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) protects California consumers through oversight, enforcement, and licensure of certified professionals. DCA collaborates with the government of Mexico to exchange best practices ranging from minimizing air pollution to expanding work opportunities. In 2021, the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) Chief presented at the Forum of Analysis of Air Contamination in Baja California, Mexico. His presentation included an overview of the California Smog Check Program and support for Baja California to restart its Smog Program. The Medical Board of California administers the Licensed Physicians and Dentists from Mexico Pilot Program (Program) to allow up to 30 licensed physicians to practice medicine in California for up to three years. In 2021, four physician applicants from Mexico were committed to the program. UC Davis held a virtual kick-off meeting with representatives from the four approved community health centers and has begun developing qualitative instruments to conduct its first round of site visits for program evaluation and effectiveness.

## **Safeguard Civil Rights**

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) continues to safeguard civil rights and enforce anti-discrimination and hate crimes policies. In San Diego and Imperial counties, DFEH received over 900 complaints of civil rights violations filed by individuals and conducted several civil rights trainings to discuss how California's civil rights laws protect people regardless of immigration status. To better serve the community, DFEH also created a new position in its outreach and education unit focused on providing Spanish-language programming.

# Environment

## CalEPA's Border Affairs Program

The California Environmental Protection Agency's (CalEPA) **Border Affairs Program** promotes cooperation to ensure a cleaner, safer, healthier, and more prosperous border region. The program is a collaborative effort among CalEPA and its boards, departments, and offices to address environmental issues on multiple fronts and coordinate efforts with other California state agencies, Tribal Nations in the border region, and federal, state, and local governments in the U.S. and Mexico.

Notably, through **Senate Bill (SB) 170 (Budget Act of 2021)**, \$20 million was carved out to address water quality problems arising in the rivers that come across the border from Mexico. The California State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and CalEPA consulted and collaborated with the Legislature on the expenditure of the funds. A portion of this funding may be expended for actions in Baja California should there be a direct benefit to California. In 2022, Assembly Bill 154 allocated an additional \$15M for these purposes. To meet this mandate, CalEPA and the State Water Board met with the Executive Officers of the Colorado River and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Boards) to identify projects that

met the Legislature's mandate to improve cross-border water quality. Continuing to build upon the Regional Boards' existing binational relationships and situational awareness of all cross-border water quality projects. In addition, CalEPA met with the local non-profit organizations, the North American Development Bank, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, International Boundary and Water Commission, the California Department of Water Resources, local cities, and counties, the Secretary of Water of Baja California, the U.S. Geological survey, and others, to identify projects that improve cross-border river quality and that can be completed within three years and provide a California-side benefit.

CalEPA chaired a binational California-Mexico Border Relations Council meeting with Baja California's Governor and Cabinet in December 2021. Topics discussed include California's waste tire program, humanitarian efforts at the border, and California's land ports of entry. As follow-up to the meeting, CalEPA continues working closely with partners in Baja California on environmental issues.

In addition, in 2021, CalEPA's Border Affairs Program:

- Facilitated the New River Improvement Project (Project) in partnership with the Department of Water Resources and the City of Calexico. In 2021, the Project finalized all permitting needed for construction, and construction is set to begin in 2022.
- Supported riparian habitat and restoration planning efforts along the New and Alamo Rivers.
- Collaborated with CalRecycle to prioritize efforts to address border waste tires in CalRecycle's Five Year Tire Plan.

- Informed development of priorities for the Tijuana River through the Eligible Public Entities Group regarding \$300 million in sewage infrastructure improvements.
- Supported state investment in Tijuana River Valley border canyon pollution reduction.
- Served on the Tijuana River Recovery team steering committee.
- Co-Chaired the California-Baja California Regional Workgroup under the Border 2025 program.
- Supported California Air Resources Board (CARB) and Baja California efforts to increase air monitoring in the border region.
- Organized the California-Mexico Border Relations Council annual report activities.
- Served as a model for improving language access to governmental services and enhanced community outreach through providing effective translation and interpretation services.
- Served on the Decarbonization Framework technical working group to provide input on San Diego County's science-based, holistic approach to guide the region's decarbonization efforts.

## Air Quality

In 2021, and as a part of core programmatic functions, CARB implemented air quality improvements specific to the border region. Under [AB 617 \(Statutes of 2017\)](#), CARB has continued to support communities and local air districts by identifying, evaluating, and reducing sources of air pollution. Through AB 617's incentive funds, clean air efforts in the border region of Calexico, El Centro, and Heber Corridor areas included the following projects in 2021:

- 9 school air filtration projects in elementary schools throughout Heber and El Centro
- 1 paving project in Calexico to reduce dust
- 1 replacement of a diesel school bus with an electric school bus, along with a charging station, in Calexico

In September 2021, CARB approved the Community Emissions Reduction Program (CERP) plan for the Eastern Coachella Valley Community and has worked with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the Community Steering Committee (CSC) there to develop the CERP by identifying strategies and actions to address top air quality concerns. Because of concerns raised by the CSC, including the unknown adverse health effects of pesticides, odors and potential toxicity resulting from possible exposure, CARB plans to collaborate with agencies like the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), so that the CERP can prioritize pesticides and begin site identification for pesticide air monitoring in the community.

In October 2021, CARB approved the CERP for the Portside Environmental Justice Neighborhoods - Phase II (Portside CERP), in San Diego. The plan focuses on reducing emissions and exposure from heavy-duty trucks, passenger vehicles, working waterfront equipment, and incompatible land uses in the Portside Community. The goal is to reduce emissions of, and exposure to:

- Oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>)
- Reactive organic gases (ROG)
- Fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)
- Diesel particulate matter (DPM)

Because of their nomination in October 2021 by the San Diego Air Pollution

Control District (SDAPCD), CARB selected the International Border Community, consisting of San Ysidro and Otay Mesa in San Diego, as part of the AB 617 program. A CERP and a Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) are in development for this community. Because of the transboundary nature of air pollution in the border region, air quality improvements in communities like both Portside (located in San Diego) and the International Border Community will benefit both sides of the border and across the binational air basin.

In addition, in 2021, CARB continued work on longstanding projects funded by the U.S. EPA, such as the Mexicali Particulate Matter Air Monitoring project, to help identify sources and the extent of particulate matter pollution transport in the Imperial County-Mexicali border region, and on the [Imperial County/Mexicali Air Alerts, Forecasts, Mobile Application & Website](#), providing public access to information on current air quality conditions, air quality forecasts, and health impacts for the Imperial County-Mexicali border region.

New efforts in 2021 at the border region include:

- The San Ysidro Community Air Monitoring project, where CARB will collaborate with the local air district, community-based organizations, researchers, and others to establish a network of low-cost sensors for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and black carbon to better understand the local air quality and the impacts of border-crossing traffic in San Ysidro.
- Work on an emissions inventory study gathering information on vehicle fleet characteristics and emissions in Northern Baja California, using roadside remote

sensing measurements and data collection.

- A project that seeks to convene state and local stakeholders to work together on addressing residents' concerns about exposures in the Salton Sea area including exposures to toxic dust from exposed the Salton Sea lakebed.
- In September of 2021, CARB also entered in a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Tijuana, whereby CARB will provide 50 low-cost PM sensors and work with the City to help set up their network. The city will use the sensor data as one tool to help identify sources that generate high concentrations of PM pollution. As part of this collaborative project, Tijuana will share information with CARB on any actions taken to reduce PM emissions based on the sensor data.

For additional CARB border efforts, please visit Appendix A.

## **Environmental Health Hazard Assessment**

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) is helping to coordinate the Border Environmental Program's efforts to maintain a healthy environment for people in the California-Mexico border region. This includes continued work on the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) and fish consumption advisories that contain important health information.

## CalEnviroScreen

CalEnviroScreen is a world-renowned environmental justice screening tool developed by OEHHA that maps population vulnerability to pollution's health effects. This is done by scoring California's approximately 8,000 census tracts based on multiple indicators of pollution burden and vulnerability. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 was released in October 2021 and includes the updated incorporation of pollution sources originating in Mexico on California communities located near the border. The supplemental report, [Improving the CalEnviroScreen score at the US-Mexico border](#) details the improvements. New information includes verified location and emissions data from larger Mexican facilities releasing toxic air contaminants that may be transported across the border region, as well as solid and hazardous waste facilities in Mexico that may pose environmental concerns to California communities.

## Fish Consumption Advisories Provided for the Border Region

OEHHA evaluates the health risks from chemical contaminants in fish recreationally caught from California waters and advises the public on which fish are safe to eat, those that should not be eaten, and those that should be consumed only in limited amounts (a map can be found [here](#)). In 2021, OEHHA released new or updated fish consumption advisories for 13 water bodies, including Senator Wash Reservoir in Imperial County. Additionally, the updated [advisory](#) provides fish consumption advice for lakes and reservoirs throughout the border region.

## Transboundary River Flows/ Water Quality

At the state level, water quality in California along the California-Mexico border is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. Both regions made notable progress in 2021 to address pollution in transboundary rivers that flow from south to north.

The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) continued to work cooperatively with U.S. EPA, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and Mexico to address New River pollution originating from Mexicali. The Regional Water Board also worked to implement its regulatory programs to address New River pollution sources in the Imperial Valley, and to assist the Council with the implementation of the New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan.

The Regional Water Board regulates and monitors discharges into the New River by controlling pollution from: 1) nonpoint sources, mainly agriculture, by implementing total maximum daily loads and programs for agricultural runoff (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program), 2) point sources, mainly wastewater treatment plants (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program), and 3) conducting monthly water quality monitoring. Notably, in December 2021, the Regional Water Board adopted General Waste Discharge Requirements (2021 General Order) for agricultural discharges in the Imperial Valley.

In 2021, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board took five actions to restore and protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the

Tijuana River, Estuary, and Pacific Ocean:

- Adopted an updated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP).
- Adopted an enforcement Order for effluent violations at the SBIWTP.
- Drafted the Total Maximum Daily Loads for Solid Waste and Bacterial Indicators and Pathogens for the Tijuana River.
- Settled the 2018 Lawsuit the Water Board and five co-plaintiffs filed against the International Boundary and Water Commission.
- Supported funding requests through Proposition 68 and SB 170 for state and local agency projects to restore and protect water quality in the Tijuana River Valley.

In 2021, the Cal OES State Warning Center received 33 spill incident notifications from the IBWC regarding the Tijuana River and followed notification protocols by notifying all U.S. stakeholders. The Cal OES Warning Center also incorporated “international spill reporting” into their written operational procedures.

For additional information on 2021 border-region water quality accomplishments, including significant enforcement actions taken in 2021, please visit Appendix B.

## **Hazardous Waste**

CalEPA’s Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), through its San Diego Border Office, is responsible for tracking imported and exported hazardous wastes through its California/Mexico Border Program (Program). In 2021, emphasis was placed on tracking imported and exported wastes. The Program database shows that during 2021, DTSC received 14 export notifications. Notices were

reviewed and the receiving California facilities were checked to assure that they were permitted to accept the wastes in question.

The DTSC San Diego Border Office also conducts coordinated inspections with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) at the Otay Mesa, San Diego County and Calexico East, Imperial County Ports of Entry. All northbound trucks importing hazardous waste and/or hazardous materials are inspected. During this reporting period, there were more than 1,784 trucks inspected, with two Summary of Violations issued to importers of record and/or transporters. For more information, see Appendix C.

## **California Natural Resources Agency**

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) advances international partnerships to promote access to natural resources, protect biodiversity, and build climate resilience. 2021 and ongoing California-Mexico border region achievements range from restoration projects, continued stewardship of Border Field State Park, and management of local projects and grants.

## **Projects and Grants**

Throughout 2021, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) continued its coordination with the Council and its stakeholders by scheduling three consultations with potential grant applicants interested in applying for the 2021 Proposition 1 Grant Funds. Since 2017, CDFW has received 19 proposals (including three awarded) for cross-border watershed projects totaling approximately \$14 million.

CDFW has awarded a total of approximately

\$2.2 million for three planning projects under its cross-border priority. In 2017, CDFW awarded funds towards planning fill removal and restoration within Tijuana River Valley (Grantee: San Diego County). The Restoration Plan for this project is complete. The other two grants, awarded in spring 2020, are on track and progressing as anticipated.

### **Tijuana River Valley Invasive Species Removal and Restoration Plan**

**(Grantee: San Diego County)**

The project is midway through the grant term and continues to collaborate with permitting agencies, the public, and other interested stakeholders. The Draft Habitat Restoration Plan is complete and will be submitted to the permitting agencies shortly, as part of the permit applications. Additionally, the draft CEQA document for this project is complete.

### **Alamo and New Rivers Riparian Habitat Restoration**

**(Grantee: River Partners)**

The project is midway through the grant term and has made great progress by submitting their restoration reports and baseline studies. Phase 1 of the Finney-Ramer Unit Habitat Restoration Project, which awarded \$1,816,516 to improve the ecological health of the Alamo River, a cross-border river threatened by proliferation of invasive plant populations. The Phase 1 Project will restore 78 acres of diverse, self-sustaining native vegetation using a variety of techniques tailored to the specific conditions that vary across the site. The project is designed to replace invasive plant populations and bare ground with self-sustaining native vegetation; this will provide high quality

wildlife habitat, sequester carbon, and create local employment and recreational opportunities. Field trials incorporated in the Phase 1 Project will further refine techniques for the remaining phases and future additional landscape-scale restoration along the Alamo River.

Looking ahead: CDFW's next solicitation for grant proposals under the Proposition 1 Grant Program will begin in early 2022. The solicitation again included a priority to "Protect and Restore Cross-Border Urban Creeks and Watersheds." \$24 million was available for funding and awarding of proposals are planned for early Summer 2022.

### **Border Field State Park**

CNRA has a direct role in the management of the Tijuana River Valley through the Department of Parks and Recreation's (State Parks) oversight of the 800-acre Border Field State Park, situated in the southwest corner of the continental United States, and adjacent to the California-Mexico Border. Border Field State Park receives direct flows from the main channel of the Tijuana River and two tributary drainages. Within the Park, State Parks is functioning as the lead agency for the design and permitting of alternatives to reroute and repair Monument Road. This main access road through Border Field State Park has been damaged by cross-border flows and is flooded with polluted water eight months each year, resulting in extensive closure of the park. State Parks continues to provide maintenance at the Park and additional funding for on-going maintenance is a pressing need.

## Projects and Grants

CNRA is proud to facilitate programs and funding through agency partners that enhance climate resilience, biological vitality and restoration in the California-Mexico border region.

### Wildlife Conservation Board

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has worked in the border region funding a number of different land acquisitions in San Diego County, as well as restoration efforts at Goat Canyon and the development of trails at Tijuana River Valley Mesa. One current project is a wetland restoration planning project at Border Field State Park that is providing \$895,000 to the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association, which is working with the California State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. The project will complete environmental analysis, permitting and design for Phase I restoration of the Tijuana Estuary by spring of 2023. WCB has funding to continue to support acquisition, restoration and public access along the border with priority for projects that are protecting biodiversity, providing climate resilience and are improving public access to lands that support fish and wildlife resources.

### State Coastal Conservancy

The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) has awarded numerous grants to enhance restoration activities in the region. Notable highlights include the following:

- **Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II (TETRP II):** SCC has granted funds to Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association to support pre-construction activities related to TETRP II Phase 1 in the Tijuana River Estuary, including

support for environmental analysis up to the circulation of documents for CEQA and NEPA Compliance.

- **Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration Project:** SCC has granted funds to State Parks to support environmental review and the development of a use agreement for restoration of the abandoned Nelson Sloan Quarry in the Tijuana River Valley. The project is anticipated to be an important part of sediment management in the region.
- **Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management Work Plan and Monitoring Program:** SCC has granted funds to the City of Imperial Beach to prepare a Sediment Management Work Plan and Monitoring Program. This priority project of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT) will identify current and potential sources of excess sediment as well as current and potential re-use alternatives to reduce management costs.
- **Tijuana River Valley - Smugglers Gulch Improvements Project:** SCC has granted funds to the County of San Diego to develop final design plans and construct the Smugglers Gulch Improvements Project at the intersection of Smugglers Gulch and Monument Road adjacent the border with Mexico. This project will help to reduce sediment and trash inputs.
- **Tijuana River Valley Coastal Trail River Crossing Feasibility Project:** SCC has granted funds to the County of San Diego to study the feasibility of a safe and reliable multi-use river crossing as part of the California Coastal Trail (CCT). This will allow connection of the



CCT from its southern terminus at the Border to existing trail in Imperial Beach, improving access to Border Field State Park.

## Ocean Protection Council

The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) has made multiple investments in the region and across San Diego County totaling \$3,695,690. Additionally, it has released its first-ever [Equity Plan](#), informed from statewide input, including from San Diego-area community leaders and advocates part of the Environmental Justice Advisory Group. Notable grant highlights include the following:

- **Bayshore Bikeway Resiliency**

**Project:** OPC granted \$445,000 to the City of Imperial Beach for the creation of a coastal resilience corridor and to retrofit a 1.2-mile segment of the San Diego Bayshore Bikeway (Bikeway) to provide multiple benefits to the disadvantaged communities of Imperial Beach including: flood protection, sea level rise (SLR) resilience, enhanced coastal access, and ecosystem resilience. The Bikeway is a heavily used recreational corridor that lies adjacent to the shoreline of the San Diego Bay. The Class 1 Bikeway is the first piece of improved infrastructure along the coastal communities of National City, Chula Vista, San Diego, Coronado, and Imperial Beach. These cities have identified existing or projected future risks to coastal flooding from elevated bay water levels.

- **San Diego Regional Coastal Resilience Roadmap to Enable Project-Based Action and Investment:** OPC awarded \$591,813 to the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative, which serves as a vital regional coordinating entity and partners closely with a set of influential organizations catalyzing climate action at the regional, state, federal and international scales. This project will develop a Coastal Resilience Roadmap to mobilize and accelerate aligned, project-based action and investment that prioritizes benefits to disadvantaged communities in the San Diego region. While building capacity for the region as a whole, this design approach will create a unique model for equitable, cross-sectoral stakeholder collaboration that aligns local planning priorities to advance shovel-ready projects that build coastal resilience on a regional scale.
- **Planning Statewide Coastal Resiliency for California State Parks and Piloting in San Diego Coast:** OPC awarded \$620,816 to Coastal Quest, which in partnership with State Parks, will conduct a local and regional planning and coordination project in the San Diego Coast District of the State Park System. The project will begin to address this danger for San Diego's individual park units, and the region while also catalyzing State Parks' SLR adaptation work statewide.



San Diego Wildlife Refuge at sunset

- **Paradise Creek Wetland Expansion and Park Site:** OPC awarded National City \$957,000 for a project that consists of demolition of a portion of the existing industrial land use, wetland expansion, creation of a park/educational picnic area, installation of five trash control devices, interpretive signage, and sidewalk improvements. The trees and vegetation for the park area and expanded wetland will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering and storing carbon which will improve air quality. The project will have a local and regional watershed impact through creating native wetland habitat for local wildlife in an Environmentally Sensitive Area within the City.
  - **San Diego County MPA Adjacent Wetland Restoration:** OPC awarded Wildcoast \$1,081,061 to restore 41.7 acres of degraded wetlands in Southern California over a 4.5-year period. The restoration will take place in wetlands adjacent to the Batiquitos Lagoon and the San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCA) in San Diego County, which contain a total of 396.8 acres of wetland ecosystem.
- Overland flow will be conveyed through the green space to help reduce runoff pollution into Paradise Creek. The project drains to Paradise Marsh (Sweetwater Marsh Unit) which is part of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

# U.S. EPA

## Border 2025

The U.S. EPA Pacific Southwest Office (Region 9) collaborated with CalEPA to implement the new five-year U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program Border 2025, signed May 2021. The Border 2025 program works on four goals to improve air quality, improve water quality, promote sustainable materials management and waste management and clean sites, and emergency response and preparedness with an emphasis on tribal engagement, environmental justice, and climate change. Border 2025 engages multiple state partners including the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), California Department of Public Health, the State Water Resources Control Board, and partner agencies in Mexico, and includes the binational North American Development Bank (NADB). CalEPA is a co-chair of the California/Baja California Regional Coordinators, which includes the U.S. EPA, the Mexican Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), and the State of Baja California Secretary for Environment and Sustainable Development. The first meeting of the Regional Coordinators, including state and Tribal government leaders, was held January 2022. The NADB, a program partner, awarded five new **grants** in the region.

## Air Quality

The U.S. EPA Clean Air Act grants funded the local Air Districts and the California Air Resources Board air quality monitoring in the San Diego-Tijuana and Imperial-Mexicali airsheds and an emission inventory study in Mexicali. Through the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) U.S. EPA funded \$304,500 to replace five Class 6 diesel trucks with battery electric trucks in Cajon Valley Union School District in San Diego County to reduce particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions. The U.S. EPA funded \$3.49M to Imperial County Air Pollution Control District to pave alleyways in Calexico to reduce PM emissions. Border 2025 funded REDSPIRA, a non-profit organization collaborating with the **Ministry of Health of Baja California** to develop a geographic information system-based analysis of existing air monitoring data, population information, and data from medical facilities in Mexicali and Imperial Valley.



U.S. EPA Deputy Administrator and U.S. Consulate staff viewing air monitor station on U.S. Consulate rooftop in Tijuana.  
Photo credit: U.S. Consulate



Trash cleanup in Anexa Miramar, Los Laureles watershed, Tijuana.  
Photo credit: Margarita Diaz

### **Water Quality**

In 2021, a Border 2020 grant of \$117,432 was leveraged to complete a modeling study by the Scripps Center for Research (SCRIPPS) and the Institution of Oceanography at Stanford to evaluate ocean water quality impacts of transboundary spill and sources of wastewater originating in Mexico under baseline and three infrastructure scenarios. The model will inform project design and implementation decisions to mitigate wastewater transboundary Tijuana River and coastal flows, ultimately improving existing environmental and public health conditions.

### **Sustainable Materials Management and Waste Management, and Clean Sites**

In collaboration with Border 2025, DTSC held a series of hazardous waste workshops for cross-border hazardous waste transporters, recyclers, and enforcement authorities. Border 2025

funded Proyecto Fronterizo de Educational Ambiental and the Environmental Health Coalition to conduct educational outreach, cleanup and monitoring activities in Goats Canyon and the Alamar River in Tijuana and San Antonio de Necua Kumiai indigenous community in Baja California to strengthen waste management, including composting, while training leaders and families in sustainable materials management.

### **Emergency Response and Preparedness**

In 2021, U.S. EPA contracted support to establish a hazardous materials (HazMat) technical team in Mexicali to provide 200 hours of HazMat training. U.S. EPA additionally contracted support to provide four sets of First Responder Awareness, First Responder Operations and Incident Command System Training in Mexicali on a quarterly basis throughout 2022. Border 2025 funded the assessment of binational contingency plans in the region.



Aerial view of dyes used for ocean modeling study in Imperial Beach, CA.  
Photo credit: Scripps

### **Environmental Justice (EJ), Climate Change and Public Health**

In May 2021, Border 2025 led a forum with 60 participants, representing non-governmental organizations working in the U.S.-Mexico border region to improve community outreach and identify emerging environmental and public health issues. The Environmental Health Coalition, through a U.S. EPA Environmental Justice grant organized training on transportation justice with Barrio Logan community residents to engage in regional planning for an effective, safe, and equitable mass transit system to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases. In December 2021, U.S. EPA joined the Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation in Calexico, California for the 42nd annual farmworker appreciation breakfast organized by the California Employment Development Department reaching 400+ participants on worker Protection Standards and pesticide safety.

### **Recent Program Accomplishments**

Border 2020, the last ten-year binational program, completed 112 projects described in the [Accomplishments Report](#).

### **California Energy Commission Collaboration with Mexico**

The California Energy Commission (CEC) has enjoyed a productive relationship with the Mexican federal government in the past (including a now-expired 2015 MOU with the federal energy agency, Sener, of the previous presidential administration) and remains committed to engaging with the current administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Mexican state governments are currently at the forefront of clean energy leadership in Mexico and the CEC has worked closely with the governments of the Mexican states of Mexico City, Jalisco, and Baja California. For additional energy collaboration information, please visit Appendix D.

# Agriculture

## California Department of Pesticide Regulation

The Department of Pesticide Regulation is housed within the umbrella of CalEPA. Throughout 2021, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) carried out important worker safety and community outreach in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. Activities included working with local counties, rights groups, community health workers (promotores), and community members in border region and throughout the state. Staff also participated in radio interviews on Spanish and Mixteco-language stations to share critical pesticide safety information.

## 42nd Annual Farm Workers Appreciation Breakfast

On December 3, 2021, DPR staff and Imperial County Agricultural Inspectors participated in the 42 Annual Farm Workers Appreciation Breakfast to provide information and resources on pesticide safety, reporting methods, and labor rights to hundreds of fieldworkers from Mexicali and the Calexico/El Centro area. This celebration is hosted by the California Employment Development Department to honor the thousands of farmworkers in Imperial County. For more information on DPR efforts, please visit Appendix C.

## California Department of Food and Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is committed to engagement and collaboration with border counterparts on a wide variety of agricultural issues. CDFA maintains participation in the Tri-National Agricultural Accord, an annual meeting of state agriculture departments from the United States, Canada and Mexico. As part of the accord, the three countries discuss a variety of cross-border issues, including animal/plant health and regulatory harmonization. CDFA also maintains engagement with Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) on climate smart agriculture, trade and labor issues.

CDFA's 2021 trade promotional activities within Mexico included participation in the Expo ANTAD and Alimentaria exhibition in Guadalajara, a virtual trade mission focusing on consumer-oriented food products, in-store supermarket promotions and social media engagements focusing on recipe development. These activities were conducted in coordination with the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association.

CDFA'S Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division continues to work with border state counterparts in addressing Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and the devastating disease that it vectors, Huanglongbing (HLB), a threat to citrus trees and citrus fruit production. California and border states continue to mirror exclusion activities and share information related to ACP activities.

CDFA's Animal Health and Food Safety Division (AHFSS) continued to focus on animal health issues in collaboration with

Mexico and U.S. border states. AHFSS communicated with Baja California animal health officials regarding Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease, COVID-19, and Mexican cattle straying across the border. AHFSS staff continue to monitor for the incidence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and other diseases in Mexico for situational awareness, particularly in case of detections near the U.S.-Mexico Border. In February, AHFSS participated in an online international tuberculosis (TB) conference between the U.S. and Mexico hosted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) titled "Reunión Internacional EU-México Contra la Tuberculosis. Misión de la Universidad" and AHFSS staff gave a presentation on Bovine Tuberculosis in Cattle and Human Populations in the U.S. In May, AHFSS staff participated in the Binational TB and Brucellosis Committee meeting and field trial of Radio-Frequency Identification devices (RFID) in Mexican feeder cattle imported at Nogales, Mexico, in collaboration with Mexico animal health officials.

AHFSS invited Mexico animal disease traceability officials to attend the International Livestock Identification Association (ILIA) conference in San Diego on July 12-14; a Mexico official attended and presented virtually, along with AHFSS. In October, AHFSS attended USDA training with Mexico animal health officials in preparation for the upcoming Tuberculosis vaccination project in Baja California dairies. November 28 to December 4, AHFSS participated with USDA and Mexico animal health officials in a week-long on-site review of the bovine Tuberculosis program in the state of San Luis Potosi. In December, AHFSS participated with Mexico animal health officials and USDA in the initiation of a binational collaborative field trial of the

BCG human Tuberculosis vaccine to determine if it can protect young dairy heifers in Baja California.



CDFA Secretary Karen Ross met with then Governor-Elect of Baja Marina del Pilar Avila Olmeda to discuss agricultural cooperation, workforce development, climate smart agriculture, and technical assistance. California and Baja share many agricultural characteristics and opportunities for collaboration. September 2021

# Transportation

The California-Mexico border is home to seven international border crossings, two of which are among the busiest of all U.S. crossings. In 2021, California's international inbound border crossings processed more than 10.6 million pedestrian crossings, more than 25.5 million personal vehicles, and over 1.4 million commercial trucks. While today's cross-border flow of people and goods supports economic growth and opportunity, it also strains nearby roads and highways serving border communities and produces greenhouse gas emissions. Caltrans, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are responsible for border mobility and enforcement. These departments are working on innovative solutions, expanding opportunities to create a safe, integrated, efficient, and secure transportation system along the California-Mexico Border.

## California-Baja California Border Master Plan

The [California-Baja California Border Master Plan](#) (BMP) is a binational, comprehensive roadmap for the U.S. and Mexico to coordinate the planning and delivery of Ports of Entry (POE), as well as transportation investments along the California-Baja California Border. In early 2021, an international delegation

of transportation officials approved the final report. Participants included nearly 40 agencies from the U.S. and Mexico at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. The report has identified close to 200 needed POE and related transportation projects on both sides of the border. Although mostly unfunded, these represent a needed investment of approximately \$13.5 billion for the California-Baja California region over the next 20 years. The BMP also identified more than 30 potential/needed strategies to address climate goals, reduce air pollution emissions, mitigate community impacts, and improve the flow of people and goods. The BMP development was co-managed by Caltrans and by Baja California's Secretariat of Infrastructure, Urban Development, and Territorial Reorganization.

## Impacts of Border Delays

Tens of thousands of personal and commercial vehicles travel between California and Baja California every day. These travelers often experience unpredictable border-crossing traffic congestion and delays. Wait times routinely exceed two hours at the seven existing POEs. These delays are not only frustrating for pedestrians and drivers, but they have a significant negative impact on the environment, economy, and overall quality of life of border communities. In February 2021, Caltrans, in close partnership with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTC), released the "[The Impacts of Border Delays at California-Baja California Land Ports of Entry](#)" report. This study assesses the economic and air quality/climate impacts caused by border delays at the California POEs. According to the study, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated



by border delays at POEs between San Diego County and Baja California reflect about 1% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from on-road motor vehicles in San Diego County. Similarly, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by border delay between Imperial County and Baja California reflect between 2% and 3% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from on-road motor vehicles in Imperial County.

## **Binational Transportation Investment**

Communities at the border are amongst the most underserved communities, experiencing fewer benefits and a greater share of negative impacts associated with California's binational transportation system. To reduce impacts of border operations and congestion, Caltrans, in partnership with several U.S. and Mexico agencies, is implementing several innovative strategies and infrastructure improvements. These initiatives will help achieve California's climate goals, reduce air pollution emissions, address community impacts, improve the flow of people and goods, and foster better collaboration between the U.S. and Mexico. Key 2021 border improvements include the items below.

### **Advanced Technology Corridors Border Pilot Project**

An important piece of California's overall strategy to combat vehicle congestion and reduce cross-border wait times is the usage of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

The purpose of using an integrated technological network for border crossing wait time data is to provide a continuous, reliable data source to support operations, security, management, and planning decisions at the border facilities, in the local community, in the region, and at

the U.S. and Mexico national levels. The Border Wait Time System (BWTS) uses Intelligent Transportation System Technologies to inform drivers of wait times at various Ports of Entry in the region to assist with informed decision-making. The BWTS will satisfy the increasing demand for California-Mexico trade at existing border crossings.

The southbound BWTS was completed in 2021 and reduces economic loss for both commercial and passenger vehicles. The fiber optic communications network (FON) portion of the project began construction in July 2021 and will ultimately connect the border region to the TMC. In addition, temporary readers were installed to collect data on commercial outbound border wait times.

The [2016 Sustainable Freight Action Plan](#) identifies the importance of using such systems in the border region, and outlines the Advanced Technology Corridors Border Pilot Project, in which Caltrans will work with federal, state, regional, local, and Mexican partners to implement information management systems, innovative operation techniques, and enhanced traffic management technology. The pilot project will use a range of advanced technologies to improve safety and mobility, while reducing the environmental impact of transportation across the border. The pilot project aims to disseminate accurate wait time information to assist local, state, and federal agencies in border operations and traffic management. In 2021, a \$500,000 grant was awarded to SANDAG to fund the development of a sustainable freight strategy for San Diego and Imperial counties that articulates a single vision for sustainable regional freight and outlines key regional freight projects and policies that will reduce emissions and foster economic competitiveness and trade.

Air quality has been a concern for residents and workers near the international border in San Ysidro and Otay Mesa. CalEPA and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment have partnered with local non-profit Casa Familiar along with San Diego State University and the University of Washington to monitor air quality throughout San Ysidro. Using air quality monitors that Caltrans will install, data will be collected to monitor the effects of traffic, congestion, and commercial vehicles in the community.

### **Otay Mesa Port of Entry**

The U.S. General Services Administration and the CBP announced the start of construction to modernize the Otay Mesa POE. The Otay Mesa POE is the busiest commercial port in California. It processed more than \$13.5 billion in exports and \$37.4 billion in imports in fiscal year 2021. Additionally, the Otay Mesa POE processed more than 2.2 million pedestrians and more than 4.7 million vehicles. Caltrans continues to work closely with the federal government on the development of the POE's expansion.

### **Otay Mesa CHP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility**

The Otay Mesa Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility (CVEF) processed over 900,000 trucks in 2021, making it the busiest CVEF in the California-Baja California region. This facility is being expanded with an additional lane and Weigh-in-Motion scale system to accommodate the anticipated increased volumes from the Otay Mesa POE modernization. In 2021, the Project Approval & Environmental Document phase for this project was completed, and conceptual design engineering was ongoing.

### **Otay Mesa East Port of Entry**

A new port of entry, the Otay Mesa East POE, and improvements to State Route 11 (SR-11), will improve mobility and reduce wait times at the California-Mexico Border. Caltrans, in coordination with SANDAG, is working with local, state and federal stakeholders in the U.S. and Mexico to construct the SR-11/Otay Mesa East POE project along the San Diego-Tijuana Border. The project includes the development of a toll road approaching the border crossing that will allow travelers to pay a fee to get to the border more quickly. The project's goal is to achieve a 20-minute average wait time using a variable tolling system that serves as both a revenue collection tool and a transportation demand management tool. Once completed, it will be California's first toll road that leads to a POE. In 2021, the California Transportation Commission voted \$25 million of Surface Transportation Block Grant funding for the project. This allocation will fund the construction of site preparation for the POE. To support cross-border activities at the future Otay Mesa East POE, this system will integrate security, dynamic tolling, and improved transportation operations. It will also include wait time and lane detection devices, communications modems, and new advance traffic controllers.

The binational Border Infrastructure Policy Group met quarterly to track milestones and resolve any policy issues to advance Otay Mesa East and other border projects. In June 2021, the governments of California and Mexico signed a Memorandum of Understanding reinforcing their mutual commitment to support the Otay Mesa East/Mesa de Otay II POE project. Under the pact, CalSTA, Caltrans, SANDAG, and the Mexico Ministries of Foreign Relations, Communications and Transportation,

and Finance and Public Credit commit to enhanced coordination and collaboration to open the 21st century POE by late 2024, providing a relief valve to the entire region with decreased congestion and wait times at the other San Diego border crossings.

In December 2021, the southbound State Route 125 (SR-125) to eastbound SR-11 and State Route 905 (SR-905) freeway connectors opened to traffic. Construction of the southbound SR-125 to westbound SR-905 connector, as well as interchanges at Alta Road and Siempre Viva Road, were ongoing throughout 2021. This roadway infrastructure will ultimately provide a direct connection to the Otay Mesa East POE and a new CHP CVEF enabling fast, predictable, and secure border crossings. The first Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) in Caltrans District 11 and the second DDI in the state of California was opened to traffic in August 2021 at Enrico Fermi Drive. A DDI allows two directions of traffic to temporarily cross to the left side of the road. It moves high volumes of traffic through an intersection without increasing the number of lanes and traffic signals. This movement provides easier access to SR-11.

### **Landscaping Project**

Design work for a landscaping project in Otay Mesa began and was completed in 2021. Construction Capital funds totaling \$4.6 million were awarded in 2021 to implement these landscape improvements.

### **Calexico West Land Port of Entry Modernization and Expansion Project**

The \$191 million Calexico West Land Port of Entry Modernization and Expansion Project will support CBP and other federal agencies' mission requirements

by expanding non-commercial vehicle inspection processing and inspection capacity at the third busiest land POE in California. This POE links the agriculturally rich Imperial Valley to Mexicali, State of Baja California's capital with a population of over 1.1 million people. A total of \$99.7 million was proposed in the President's Fiscal Year 2021 budget request to Congress for the final construction of a new pedestrian processing building with an expanded number of northbound pedestrian inspection lanes, demolition of legacy facilities and significant earthwork. The anticipated completion date for this project is Spring 2023.

### **Calexico East Expansion Project**

The Calexico East expansion project proposes to widen the off-system bridge over the All-American Canal at the U.S.- Mexico border approximately 0.7 miles south of State Route 7. The project will widen the bridge on its east side to minimize traffic impacts during construction and reduce construction costs; add four northbound lanes, two commercial vehicle lanes and two passenger vehicle lanes. The existing northbound pedestrian walkway will be shifted to the west to facilitate the addition of the two new northbound passenger vehicle lanes. New concrete barriers and minor modifications will be added to existing landscaping, drainage, signage, and lighting. This project was advertised as a Design-Build project in March 2021. An early release package for the fabrication of the steel plate girders was completed in October 2021, and the final design plans were completed in December 2021.

### **EI Protector Program**

The goal of the EI Protector Program is to educate and encourage positive traffic

safety behavior and to build better community relations between the community and law enforcement agencies. The driving force and focus of this program is the use of a CHP officer of Hispanic ancestry or officers that are bilingual and bicultural - known as the El Protector Program Coordinator. The coordinator organizes community events, provides traffic safety education presentations and serves as a role model.



Caltrans/SANDAG simulation of the Border Wait Time System



SR 11/Enrico Fermi Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI), second DDI in the State of California

# Safety

Border safety issues continued to be addressed largely through the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program (OSPG), Operation Gridlock, the California Highway Patrol Border Division and the California Maritime Security Program.

## Operation Stonegarden Program

The Operation Stonegarden grant (OSPG) in Imperial County is administered by the Imperial County Sheriff’s Office, with El Centro Sector (ELC) having operational oversight. The program, which had a total of 14 participating agencies, includes the following law enforcement community:

- Imperial County Sheriff’s Office
- Brawley Police Department
- Calexico Police Department
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Highway Patrol–El Centro
- California Highway Patrol–Calexico
- California Highway Patrol–Winterhaven
- Calipatria Police Department
- El Centro Police Department
- Imperial Police Department
- Imperial County Probation Department
- Imperial County District Attorney’s Office–Investigations
- Imperial County Narcotics Task Force
- Riverside County Sheriff’s Department

The Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) operating in the ELC area of responsibility (AOR) are involved in a network of criminal activities to include the smuggling and transportation of currency, weapons, and narcotics. In the past, Imperial County has served as a heavily trafficked and preferred entry corridor for both human and narcotic traffickers. This was largely due to the increase in border security in San Diego Sector (SDC), the proximity of interstate and State Routes/highway systems to the international border, and the proximity of major metropolitan cities such as Los Angeles, California.

The goal of current and past collaboration between ELC and Imperial Valley OPSG partners has been making the operational environment hostile to TCOs by targeting their reliance on motor vehicles and travel corridors to smuggle their illicit cargo.

Category	2021 OPSG Stats
Mileage	166,473
Vehicle Stops	7,784
Citations	5,574
Prosecution Cases	119
Significant Seizures	24
Narcotic Cases	54
Marijuana (kg)	0.44
Cocaine (kg)	7.53
Methamphetamines (kg)	257.46
Heroin (kg)	45
Fentanyl (kg)	0.38
Other Narcotics (kg)	0.12
Currency Seized	\$1,258.00
Firearms Seized	8
Vehicles Seized	5

## OSPG Accomplishments

Imperial County law enforcement agencies acquired a regional automated license plate reader program (ALPR) during the OPSG 2016 grant year and continued upgrading and expanding the system during 2021. The ALPR system continues to enhance the ability of officers to identify wanted criminals and stolen vehicles, both of which often have ties to TCO activity.

Operation Spring Cleaning was a collaborative effort between various federal and local law enforcement agencies targeting known criminals operating in the Imperial Valley and surrounding areas. The targeted fugitives were wanted for various crimes, to include human and narcotics smuggling. The operation supported border security efforts by advancing the common goal of disrupting and degrading TCO activity in the ELC AOR.

### Operation Spring Cleaning Stats 2021

Category	Results
Agencies Participated	14
Felony and Misdemeanor Arrests	27
Seized Firearms	2

Operation Calexico PD Assist was a collaborative effort between ELC, Calexico Police Department, Imperial County Narcotics Task Force, and Brawley Police Department targeting individuals identified as career criminals.

### Operation Calexico PD Assist 2021

Category	Results
Agencies Participated	4
Felony Arrests	5

The operations noted above are only two examples of OPSG partnerships. OPSG Friendly Forces frequently respond to warrant service callouts at CBP facilities such as CBP Ports of Entry, USBP Stations, and USBP Checkpoints. This is an invaluable service that leverages their unique authority to help ensure maximum consequence delivery for criminals encountered during daily operations. Imperial and Riverside County state and local law enforcement agencies continue to provide ELC and partner federal agencies invaluable support in combatting the complex cross-border security threat presented by TCOs.

## California Maritime Security Program

The California Maritime Security Program is responsible for maritime safety and security awareness for the State of California. It has assigned units throughout the state, including Sacramento, Northern and Southern California, focused on maritime recovery, security, and intelligence. These units collaborate with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) who collaborate with all state security programs, as well as the United States Navy. They are permanent members of the USCG Sector Staffs and coordinated with the State Threat Assessment Center (STAC) and the local fusion centers throughout the state. They are staff members of the USCG Command Staff at District 11, USCG Headquarters at Alameda, California.

The Cal OES Maritime Security Program collaborates with USCG, U.S. Navy, and local marine law enforcement, including San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles County, and San Francisco Bay Area/Delta Region in joint operational efforts. The Cal OES Maritime Security Program

participates as subject matter experts and observers and in full coordination with the USCG in marine training, meetings, and in some rare cases, in real world operations with Mexico. Cal OES also shares best practices, lessons learned, and catastrophic plans with the Mexican Marine operators as they are part of the West Coast Sea Board.

The joint operational efforts also focus on monitoring, responding and securing waters offshore of Western Mexico, the State of California and beyond. They provide classified training to Mexican units on special tactics, such as marine night infiltration operations. In 2021, Cal OES participated only in planning and debriefs of such operations. During 2021 Cal OES continued to offer military and maritime expertise strictly as advisors or observers to the Mexican units.

## **Cross-Border Oil Spill Responses**

Efforts continue between the USCG, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), Cal OES, and the Mexican Government for oil spill response. When a spill occurs, the USCG and the DFW, Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) activate and establish the Unified Command in response to an oil spill. The Cal OES Maritime program's role is to coordinate stakeholders for the Liaison Unit, including representatives from the Mexican Government and coordinates with the leader of the Unified Command (USCG) to appoint the Local Government On Scene Coordinator (LGOSC). A Cal OES Maritime representative also assumes the role of Co-leader of the Marine Transportation Systems Recovery Unit (MTSRU) as part of the Unified Command.

In 2021, there were no real-world oil spills that required joint California and Mexico Response. However, during the Huntington Beach oil spill, lines of communication were kept open in the event there was any effect on Mexico's territory. Additionally, Cal OES, DFW, and the USCG continued to invited Mexico to participate virtually in several oil spill response drills. Mexican Liaison Officers at U.S. Navy Third Fleet Headquarters attended virtually.

In many cases in 2021, as it was for 2020, ships that normally make port-of-calls in Mexico did not due to Mexican work slowdowns, primarily agriculture. When ships do not make their stops in Mexico, the ship's tonnage is too high to clear the depth requirements into California's inland ports, Stockton, and West Sacramento. Mexican officials, USCG, Cal OES Maritime and the ports successfully maintained delivery of critical payloads to California's Agricultural Industry by forming a virtual task team to monitor this situation for the coming year.

# Health

## California Department of Public Health's Office of Binational Border Health

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH) was legislatively mandated in 1999 by Assembly Bill 63 (Health & Safety Code 475) to facilitate cooperation between California and Mexico health officials and professionals to reduce the risk of disease in the California border region. The mission of OBBH is to facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration between California and Mexico health officials, health professionals, and communities in order to optimize border and binational health. OBBH has collaborated with partners on both sides of the border to address priority issues through collaborative projects, such as binational symposiums and epidemiology partnerships on public health issues of mutual interest with Mexico. More information about OBBH is available on their website: [CDPH-Office of Binational Border Health](#).

### Monitoring and Surveillance

Under the CDPH Center for Infectious Disease, OBBH focuses on enhancing the detection and response capabilities to infectious disease incidents and threats in the border region. During 2021, OBBH continued to monitor and investigate

binational infectious disease cases and outbreaks in the border region. The Office worked collaboratively with state, local, and federal partners focused on the surveillance, monitoring, notification, and investigation of infectious disease cases and outbreaks, particularly COVID-19.

Throughout the pandemic, OBBH tracked over 15,000 binational COVID-19 cases reported by local health jurisdictions, allowing for the implementation of binational U.S.-Mexico protocols to take public health action. Such protocols include the United States-Mexico Coordination on Public Health Events of Mutual Interest & the Operational Protocol for Binational Communication and Coordination on Disease Notifications and Outbreaks. OBBH strengthened its long-standing collaboration with the Department of Epidemiology within the Baja California Secretariat of Health. As part of these efforts, OBBH issued situational awareness reports, shared existing COVID-19 guidance, and served as the liaison between Baja California and U.S. entities at the local, state, and federal level.

OBBH continued to manage and coordinate the California Border Infectious Disease Program (CA-BIDS), a collaboration between CDPH, CDC, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and the Imperial County Public Health Department. CA-BIDS activities focus on enhancing surveillance, laboratory testing, and reporting of urgent and routine infectious diseases in the border region. These include conducting surveillance for respiratory illness, such as influenza-like illness and COVID-19 like illness at sites located throughout the border region. Other BIDS surveillance activities include conducting binational surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) at hospitals in Imperial



County and Mexicali, Baja California. OBBH also assists with the CA SARS-CoV-2 and Respiratory Virus Sentinel Surveillance Program (CaSRVSS), a program dedicated to enhancing surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 throughout the State of California. OBBH assists with the implementation of CaSRVSS along the border.

Additionally, OBBH, in partnership with CA-BIDS, has collaborated with the CDC United States-Mexico Unit (USMU) and other border states to implement COVID-19 focused surveys in selected regions of the U.S.-Mexico Border. The objectives of this project are: 1) to understand cross-border mobility patterns, 2) better understand knowledge, attitudes, and practices among border crossers as it pertains to COVID-10, and 3) gain better understanding of health care utilization patterns and evaluate the impact of health equity indicators on the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Phase 1 of data collection was completed in 2021 and Phase 2 of data collection is planned for 2022.

### **Border Health Status Report**

CDPH-OBBH continues to produce a “[Border Health Status Report to the Legislature](#)” that provides a summary of the general health status of the population living in the California southern border region. There are demographical, geographical, and health-related differences between the southern California border region when compared to non-border regions of California. The Border Health Status report summarizes the demographic information and health indicators including obesity, diabetes, suicide, tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STI’s), HIV/AIDS, select vaccine-preventable diseases, and COVID-19. The report delineates the implications these diseases present for

the California border region counties (i.e., San Diego and Imperial).

### **Asylum Seeker Health Services Project**

The Southern California Asylum Seeker Health Surveillance and Linkage to Care project, also referred to as the Asylum Seeker Health Services Project (ASHS), is a collaborative project between the CDPH Office of Border Health and the Office of Refugee Health. The ASHS project assists Southern California local health jurisdictions to facilitate health insurance enrollment and provide health services to asylum seekers. This program makes health screening more accessible to asylum-seekers and allows asylum-seekers to have the option of receiving medical screening at the port of entry. OBBH managed the community outreach component of this project and distributed multilingual flyers to 800 partners in both counties. Additionally, OBBH staff presented information about this project to several legal service providers, health service providers, and community-based organizations serving asylum-seekers in Southern California and Baja California.

### **Advisory Group**

OBBH convenes a voluntary statewide community advisory group twice a year to develop a strategic plan with goals for implementation, and to advise CDPH and the California members of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission. The group of 12 members includes representatives from Los Angeles, San Diego, and Imperial counties’ health departments, association of local health officers, local government, hospitals, health plans, community-based organizations, and universities. In 2021, public meetings were held by the OBBH Advisory Group with discussion of

OBBH's strategic plan and the office's role in the prevention, control, and mitigation of COVID-19 in the border region.

## **The California Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Investigations Branch**

The Environmental Health Investigations Branch (EHIB) contracted with Comite Civico del Valle in Imperial County to deliver the Asthma Management Academy (AsMA) virtually. This academy is a professional development series for community health workers to learn how to deliver evidence-based asthma self-management education, conduct an in-home asthma trigger assessments, and review best practices for home visits. In the past year, organizations trained near the border included Somali Family Services and La Maestra Community Health Center. EHIB also contracted with and trained a new community partner agency, Somali Family Service of San Diego. This partnership engaged with local immigrant communities in San Diego County in the prevention of mercury poisonings from the use of imported creams used for removing blemishes and lightening skin. The mission of EHIB is to protect the health of all Californians by identifying environmental hazards, partnering with communities to build their capacity, and promoting healthy environments. For more information about EHIB, visit the [EHIB webpage](#).

CDPH will continue to focus on border and binational communities through the efforts of border health programs.

# Emergency Management

## **Cal OES Mexico Collaborations**

The Governor’s Office of Emergency Management (Cal OES), a leader in emergency management and homeland security, builds towards a safer more resilient California, especially along the California-Mexico border region by leveraging effective partnerships with federal, state, local, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Mexican counterparts. Together, Cal OES collaborates on initiatives and shares best practices in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating the impacts of all hazards. Through these partnerships, Cal OES supports many key initiatives that directly benefit the relationship with Mexico. In 2021, California and Mexico continued to strengthen a long-standing relationship by collaborating on many initiatives.

## **Baja California North Delegation**

In September 2021, Cal OES welcomed the Governor of Baja California Marina del Pilar Ávila Olmeda and her delegation, consisting of members of her staff, Baja State Legislators, and the Consul General of Mexico in Sacramento. Cal OES Director Ghilarducci and Governor Ávila met to discuss ongoing and future cooperation on emergency and disaster

response, including re-signing the California-Baja California Memorandum of Understanding, coordinating a meeting between Director Ghilarducci and her Director of Civil Protection, discussion of earthquake assistance needs, as well as developing a formal arrangement to have Mexican firefighters directly assist California combat wildfires.

## **Cal OES/Baja California North COVID-19 Collaborations - PPE Donations**

Throughout 2021, in efforts to reduce border region impacts from COVID, Cal OES collaborated with San Diego County and Imperial County, as well as the Mexican Consulate, to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Cal OES donated over 4 million pieces of PPE, including masks, gowns, and sanitizers to Baja CA North. In addition to the PPE, Cal OES, in partnership with the private sector, donated 6,000 thermal blankets to various NGOs, clinics, and other humanitarian organizations in Baja California.

## **Commissions of the Californias (ComCal)**

Cal OES continues to serve as a supporting participant on behalf of the State in ComCal and has been in communication with both Baja CA Norte and Sur on emergency management, including sharing information on disasters and COVID-19.

## **Unified Border Coordination Group**

Cal OES established the Unified Border Coordination Group to provide humanitarian assistance to the asylum-seeking migrant population along the California-Mexico border. Cal OES supported the Counties of San Diego, Imperial, and Riverside with a Unified Command Team comprised of local, state, and federal partners, as well as four NGOs, to provide COVID testing, vaccinations, medical screening, and collaborated with the NGOs to assist the migrants to reach their destination. Cal OES also attends the Border Alliance calls sponsored by Save the Children that focus on the Southwest Border.

## **Cal OES – Mexico Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Cal OES continues to collaborate with the Mexican Consulate on the development of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of the Governance of the United Mexican States through the Civil National Coordination of Civil Protection (CNCP) focused on safety and emergency preparedness, including sharing best practices, training, and exchange of technical knowledge in risk prevention and disaster management. Due to the COVID pandemic impacts, the MOU has been placed on hold with plans to finalize in 2022.

## **9-1-1 Emergency Communications Branch, Public Safety Answering Point Interaction with Mexico**

Cal OES collaborates with public safety agencies in the state to provide California citizens and visitors with the best emergency services available. Cal OES Public Safety Communications 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Branch assists local public safety answering points (PSAP) with administration and funding. This allows PSAPs to provide effective telephone access to emergency services for all 9-1-1 calls and the operation of the 9-1-1 system.

Cal OES works closely with four PSAPs in San Diego and Imperial Counties, which interact daily with Mexico to assist with the 9-1-1 calls originating within Mexico or from Mexican citizens that reside and/or work in bordering cities and towns within California. The administrative and funding support of this Cal OES-PSAP partnership allows Cal OES to continue supporting and promoting these collaboration efforts with Mexico.

## **Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG)**

Cal OES, along with officials from federal, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, continues to participate in



Cal OES meets with incoming Baja California Governor Marina del Pilar Avila Olmeda.  
Photo credit: Cal OES

the Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG) to discuss emergency communication efforts concerning terrorist threats, hazmat incidents, natural disasters, border violence, escapes and evasions, medical emergencies, and cross-border interference. The SWBCWG meets quarterly to provide opportunities to discuss ongoing emergency communication efforts and identify communications gaps along the border to justify federal funding to help fill those gaps.

### **Cross-Border Communication Workgroup**

Cal OES state representatives continue to participate in the Binational Cross-Border Communication Workgroup. Throughout 2021, the workgroup participated in Binational COVID-19 Conference Calls, which includes local and county representatives from both California and Baja California for a mutual exchange of information and briefings on COVID-19 status updates.

### **International Boundary Water Commission – Tijuana River Spill Notification Protocols**

Cal OES continues to monitor and collaborate with the International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC) on reporting raw sewage spill discharging into the Tijuana River, which has the potential to arrive at the International Boundary or any other location along the international border. The IBWC requires their Mexican Counterpart, Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas, Sección Mexicana, and the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Tijuana (CESPT), to immediately report sewage spills that have a potential cross-border impact along the Tijuana River.

In 2021, the Cal OES State Warning Center received 33 spill incident notifications from the IBWC regarding the Tijuana River and followed notification protocols by notifying all U.S. stakeholders. The Cal OES Warning Center also incorporated “international spill reporting” into their written operational procedures.

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# Appendix A: Additional Air Quality Efforts

The [Carl Moyer Program](#) and the [Community Air Protection \(CAP\) incentive program](#) have directed funds to the border region through the SDAPCD, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control Districts (ICAPCD), and the SCAQMD, to support projects that reduce harmful emissions. Since 2018 and through 2021 these programs' investments include:

- Over 100 projects totaling \$20 million achieving over 500 tons of NO<sub>x</sub>, ROG, and PM emissions reductions.
- In 2021 Carl Moyer funding and CARP approval delivered new Tier-4 engine locomotives for use in San Diego County.

CARB's [Supplemental Environmental Projects \(SEP\)](#) program invested approximately \$1.3 million in the border zone for projects such as adding two school air quality educational programs in San Diego and one environmental research and outreach program in Imperial County. In addition to this, CARB provided the SDAPCD with 40 "No-Idling" signs for schools and 12 "No-Idling" signs for trucks in high priority locations, to be decided by the community.

Additionally, in 2021, major investments in the border region came from CARB's Low Carbon Transportation Program - a mixture of mobile source incentive programs designed to help accelerate

the State's transition to low-carbon passenger and freight transportation. The LCT program invested over \$50 million in the border region on innovative projects such as:

- [Clean Mobility in Schools Pilot Project at Lincoln High School](#) – the project increases the visibility of and access to zero-emission technologies and supporting charging infrastructure in the entire Lincoln Cluster of schools. The project includes battery-electric food delivery vehicles, a variety of zero-emission landscape and custodial equipment, zero-emission vehicles, and battery-electric school buses with managed charging stations.
- [Advanced Technological Demonstration and Pilot projects](#) help accelerate the next generation of advanced technology vehicles, equipment, or emission controls which are not yet commercialized. [The California Collaborative Advanced Technology Drayage Truck Demo project](#) features Class 8 heavy-duty on-road trucks used to transport cargo to or from California's ports and intermodal rail yards comprise this portfolio of commercially promising zero and near-zero emission truck technologies. This project will deploy 44 pre-commercial Class 8 zero- and near-zero emission drayage trucks and infrastructure into fleets in and around several ports, including the Ports of San Diego.
- The Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot program funds opportunities for communities to conduct transportation needs assessments and implement mobility projects



in disadvantaged, low-income, and tribal communities. In 2021, grant agreements were executed for projects in [Chula Vista](#), [National City](#), and [Calexico](#) for things like community shuttles, mobility on demand service, and zero-emission micro-transit services.

- Overcoming barriers to access clean transportation: CARB's LCT program also funded multiple Sustainable Transportation Equity Projects in 2021 at the border region intended to address barriers and transportation needs for low-income residents and disadvantaged communities, and to help overcome barriers identified in CARB's SB 350 Guidance Document. Projects in this category include the Native American Environmental Protection Coalition- Manzanita Reservation, in San Diego County, and a planning grant supporting the [SR-15 Transportation Equity & Affordable Housing \(TEAH\) Task Force](#), to address transportation to inequities.

# Appendix B: Additional Water Advancements in 2021

## Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Colorado River Water Board) is engaged in multiple activities at the California-Mexico border. The board continued to work cooperatively with U.S. EPA, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and Mexico to address New River pollution originating from Mexicali. The Regional Water Board also worked to implement its regulatory programs to address New River pollution from sources in the Imperial Valley, and to assist the Border Relations Council with the implementation of the New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan.

In January, March, May, July, September, and November 2021, Regional Water Board staff participated in the Binational Technical Committee (BTC) meetings held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Representatives included the Regional Water Board, the Comision Nacional Del Agua (CONAGUA), Comision Internacional de Limites del Agua (CILA), International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and Comision Estatal del Agua (CEA). Representatives of the BTC discussed the actions implemented by Comision Estatal de Servicios Publicos de Mexicali (CESPM) to improve infrastructure, the

usage of the equipment received by CESPM to help prevent sewage bypasses, the notification protocol for bypasses, and water quality data for the New River.

A raw sewage discharge into the New River occurred in Mexicali, Baja California in November 2021, caused by a ruptured sewer line due to construction work (not performed by CESPM). The discharge volume was 95,102 gallons over a period of approximately 2 hours.

In December 2021, Regional Water Board representatives attended the California Mexico Borders Relation Council Meeting.

The Regional Water Board regulates and monitors discharges into the New River by controlling pollution from: 1) nonpoint sources, mainly agriculture, by implementing total maximum daily loads and programs for agricultural runoff (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program), 2) point sources, mainly wastewater treatment plants (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program), and 3) conducting monthly water quality monitoring.

In December 2021, the Regional Water Board adopted General Waste Discharge Requirements (2021 General Order) for agricultural discharges in the Imperial Valley. The 2021 General Order implements precedential requirements for all agricultural discharges in California and is necessary to meet the requirements of the state's non-point source policy. The 2021 General Order requires agricultural dischargers to implement management practices to protect water quality and perform necessary monitoring.

In 2021, the Regional Water Board renewed three National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits within the border area. Two facilities discharge to the New River: City of Brawley Wastewater Treatment

Plant and the Naval Air Facility El Centro Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City of Imperial Wastewater Treatment Plan discharges to the Alamo River.

In 2021, four enforcement actions with monetary penalties for NPDES facilities with major effluent violations in the border area were resolved; they are 1) Imperial Irrigation District facilities, 2) City of Imperial, 3) Heber Public Utility District, and 4) City of Brawley.

Throughout 2021, the Regional Water Board continued to implement its monthly water quality monitoring program for the New River at the international border with Mexico to track the river's cleanup progress, track compliance with California water quality standards, and track emerging pollutants of concern.

## **The New River Improvement Project**

In 2018, the design contract for Phase 1 of the New River Improvement Project (NRIP) was awarded to a consultant. The key agencies cooperating on this project are the City of Calexico, Imperial County, and Imperial Irrigation District. Phase 1 of the NRIP is the design of three elements: a trash screen, a bypass encasement, and a pump back system. The trash screen would remove trash, which is a carrier for pathogens and other compounds that pose a health threat. The bypass encasement would divert the New River to bypass the city of Calexico, minimizing human contact with the severely polluted river. The pump back system would pump secondary treated wastewater into the existing riverbed to partially replenish the diverted flow and create wetlands in the community.

The design and engineering plans (Phase 1) of the NRIP were finalized on October

31, 2018. Through a [MOU](#), the City of Calexico, Imperial County, and Imperial Irrigation District have each agreed to pay up to \$50,000 annually for the operation and maintenance of the completed project. The California Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 includes \$28 million capital investment for the NRIP. This allocation provides the funding required for construction of the project (Phase 2).

The City of Calexico, as Lead Agency of the NRIP, proceeded with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, which included the adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) by the City's Council (June 2020), the filing of the Notice of Determination with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse (June 2020), and the public appeal period concluding with no appeals received (July 2020). The City of Calexico anticipates bidding and awarding a contract for construction to begin in the summer of 2022.

The City of Calexico is currently working with the different permitting agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Division of Water Rights, and the Regional Water Board, to move the New River Improvement Project forward. The City of Calexico has hired a contractor to oversee the construction project, and Regional Water Board permitting includes (1) 401 water quality certification, (2) construction dewatering waste discharge requirements, (3) general stormwater construction, and (4) a modification to the NPDES permit for the City of Calexico's Wastewater Treatment Plant to change the location of the discharge. Progress updates on Regional Water Board permitting are as follows: (1) The 401 water quality certification was issued January 5, 2022; (2 and 3) The construction dewatering waste discharge

requirements and general stormwater construction will be followed up on by the contractor once necessary; and, (4) A permit application has been received for the modification to the NPDES permit. The revision to the NPDES permit is expected for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. All permits for construction are expected to be fully secured by 2022.

## **San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board 2021 Regulatory Actions in the Tijuana River Valley**

In 2021, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board took five actions to restore and protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Tijuana River, Estuary, and Pacific Ocean:

- Adopted an updated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP).
- Adopted an enforcement Order for effluent violations at the SBIWTP.
- Drafted the Total Maximum Daily Loads for Solid Waste and Bacterial Indicators and Pathogens for the Tijuana River.
- Settled the 2018 Lawsuit the Water Board and five co-plaintiffs filed against the International Boundary and Water Commission.
- Supported funding requests through Proposition 68 and SB 170 for state and local agency projects to restore and protect water quality in the Tijuana River Valley.

## **Regulatory Actions in the Tijuana River Watershed**

The San Diego Water Board and the IBWC agreed upon incorporation of some of

the water quality monitoring included in Investigative Order R9-2020- 0030 that was incorporated into the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) NPDES Permit update in May 2021. In addition, the San Diego Water Board updated and reissued the NPDES Permit for the City of San Diego South Bay Water Reclamation Plant (SDWRP) and revised receiving waters monitoring and reporting requirements for both Permits receiving water conditions in the U.S. and Mexico waters offshore and address climate change and plume tracking offshore. The San Diego Water Board also adopted Cease and Desist Order No. R9-2021-0107 for the SBIWTP to bring the facility back into compliance with effluent limitations following repeated exceedances of numeric effluent limits.

## **Total Maximum Daily Loads**

The San Diego Water Board has completed the technical reports and supporting documents for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLS) for solid waste and bacterial indicators and pathogens. The TMDLS calculate waste load reductions necessary to achieve water quality objectives downstream of the flood control channel and canyons, which were identified in the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy as areas to be actively managed to reduce transboundary flows of wastes. The TMDLS will include enforceable standards and an implementation plan to achieve reductions in waste loads causing impairment. The draft TMDL Technical 2020 Annual Report will be peer reviewed and open for public comment in early 2022 with adoption tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2023. The draft TMDLS assign waste load reductions to the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission, which owns the flood control channel and canyon collectors

where waste load reductions must be met to protect downstream waters, habitats, and communities.

## **2020-2022 Integrated Report**

In January 2021, the State Water Board adopted the 2020-2022 Clean Water Act section 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report. The San Diego Water included new lines of evidence to support additional listings of impairment for the Tijuana River in the 303(d) Impaired Water Bodies List. The additional impairment listings include ammonia (Unionized), turbidity, color, and dichlorvos. In addition, several data sets of pesticide analyses are being evaluated and may result in additional impairment listings.

## **Litigation Status**

In 2018, the San Diego Water Board, City of San Diego, State Lands Commission, City of Imperials Beach, Port of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, and Surfrider International (plaintiffs) filed suit against the IBWC for repeated, water quality impacts from uncontrolled transboundary flows of polluted runoff.

In July 2021, the Plaintiffs and IBWC jointly petitioned the federal court for a second stay of the litigation filed in 2018 while the parties engaged in negotiations on settlement. The IBWC successfully implemented equipment purchases and implementation of short-term management practices agreed in the stay request to reduce cross border flows of wastes in the Tijuana River and tributary Canyons. Subsequently, the parties jointly moved to settle the lawsuits in April 2021. Pursuant to the settlement, IBWC agreed to diligently mitigate water that flows across the border, develop a monitoring assessment plan, coordinate with agencies in Mexico, and regularly

share information with stakeholders on its progress for a period of seven years. The federal court granted the settlement Order on April 11, 2022. The Water Board is continuing to negotiate a settlement of a suit brought separately by the U.S. Department of Justice and IBWC against the San Diego Water Board regarding issues it raised in the NPDES Permit reissuance.

## **Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT) Projects and Initiatives**

The Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team comprises over 30 governmental entities and non-profits that coordinate local efforts on several projects, including the reclamation of the Nelson Sloan Quarry, drafting of a valley wide Sediment Management Plan, development of a proposal to design and construct and operate a sediment and trash control basin in Smuggler’s Gulch, maintenance of the Goat Canyon sediment and trash basins, coordination of monitoring and local agency engagement and feedback regarding the Minute 320 work groups and the USMCA Border Pollution projects.

## **Border Pollution Control Projects**

### **USMCA Process**

The Tijuana River is a transboundary river that flows from Tijuana into California and onto the California coast. Tijuana often discharges excess sewage directly into the river. “Transboundary flow days” indicate raw sewage flowing into California and onto the coast, causing hundreds of days of beach closures every year, and pollution in San Diego and Imperial beach. To help resolve this pollution challenge, the San Diego Water

Board and CalEPA participate in the U.S. EPA Eligible Public Agency Coordination Group (EPECG) meetings and advocate for U.S. side border pollution control infrastructure, including expansion of the International Wastewater Treatment Plant and a Tijuana River Diversion and Advanced Primary Treatment System to reduce transboundary sewage flow days from over 100 days per year to approximately 12 days per year.

On November 8, 2021, Radhika Fox, the U.S. EPA Assistant Administrator for Water, announced the [preferred set of projects](#) for the \$300 million authorized by Congress in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to address border water quality issues in the Tijuana River. She announced that the review of the priority projects, pending final selection, would include a 35 million gallon per day (MGD) capacity expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (ITP) and a 50 MGD Tijuana River Diversion System and Advanced Primary Treatment Plant to be located in the U.S. in San Ysidro. The expanded ITP would treat most of the sewage from metropolitan Tijuana and provides for the potential for recycled water reuse in Mexico. The projects also include the construction of a new 5 MGD San Antonio de los Buenos wastewater treatment plant (SABTP), reuse of effluent from two treatment plants in Tijuana, and significant repairs and upgrades of the collection system in Tijuana.

A Fact Sheet and a copy of the November 8, 2021, EPECG Presentation are available at <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/usmca-tijuana-river-watershed>. The projects identified by EPA focus primarily on the key concerns and project priorities identified jointly by the Water Board, City of San Diego, County of San Diego, City of Imperial Beach, the

Port of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, City of Coronado, City of National City, State Lands Commission, and Surfrider International in Resolution [R9-2019-0246](#). The cost of the Comprehensive Infrastructure Solution proposed by U.S. EPA is \$566 million. U.S. EPA is working with agencies and representatives of elected officials in both countries to identify funding strategies for the \$266 million not covered by the available \$300 million from the USMCA. U.S. EPA leadership has been meeting with state and federal agencies in Mexico and convened a U.S.-Mexico Binational Meeting on Transborder Water Pollution on November 22, 2021. The U.S. Consulate General issued a Joint Statement regarding the Meeting: U.S. – Mexico Binational Meeting on Transborder Water Pollution - U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Mexico ([usembassy.gov](http://usembassy.gov)). Current information on the most recent project priorities and process can be found [here](#).

## Smugglers Gulch

The San Diego Water Board, City of San Diego, and County of San Diego met in 2021 to discuss developing a project proposal for addressing solid waste and sediment in Smuggler’s Gulch. The conceptual project consists of two projects (Projects 10 and 11) studied in the “[SB 507 Needs and Opportunities Assessment Report](#)” prepared by the County of San Diego. The County assumed the role of lead agency for the Proposition 68 grant application and CEQA compliance with support from the Regional Water Board and City of San Diego. A critical requirement for long term success of the Smuggler’s Gulch project will be an operations and maintenance plan and funding strategy. If the grant proposal is funded by the California Coastal Conservancy, the basin and trash boom will be constructed and

operational in 2024. The County of San Diego and supporting agencies will implement operations and maintenance, but the San Diego Water Board will seek a federal fair share contribution or ownership of the facility once constructed to achieve compliance with the waste load reductions calculated in the draft TMDL for solid waste in Smuggler’s Gulch.

## **SB 170 Projects**

In September 2021, the California Legislature approved SB 170 (Budget Act of 2021) which provided \$20 million in project funding for the Tijuana and New River border watersheds. In March 2022, the Legislature held a special workshop on the water quality issues and opportunities to utilize the SB 170 funds for projects in the U.S. and Mexico to restore and protect the New River and Tijuana River. The San Diego Board led the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team in several meetings to identify and proposed projects for SB 170 funding from the Strategic Plans including the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy, [SB 507 Tijuana River Valley Needs and Opportunities Assessment Report](#), and the notes from the Minute 320 Workgroups for sediment, trash, and water quality. The projects that were identified for funding priority included:

- Augmentation of the Smuggler’s Gulch Improvement Project (\$4 million)
- Tijuana River Main Channel Trash Boom (\$4 million)
- “Brown Property” Tijuana River Valley Hydrology and Habitat Restoration (\$1.8 million)
- Smart Covers Sewerage Flow Monitoring (\$0.2 million)

The State Water Resources Control Board will consider funding awards in 2022.

## **International Boundary Water Commission – Tijuana River Spill Notification Protocols**

Cal OES continues to monitor and collaborate with the International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC) on reporting raw sewage spill discharging into the Tijuana River, which has the potential to arrive at the international boundary or any other location along the international border. The IBWC requires their Mexican Counterparts Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas, Sección Mexicana, and the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Tijuana (CESPT) to immediately report any sewage spill that has a potential cross-border impact along the Tijuana River. The Cal OES Warning Center also incorporated “international spill reporting” into their written operational procedures. Finally, as part of the aforementioned settlement of litigation, IBWC agreed to expand on notification and include social media posts to more accurately and promptly inform the public of water quality risks.

In 2021, the Cal OES State Warning Center received 33 spill incident notifications from the IBWC regarding the Tijuana River and followed notification protocols by notifying all U.S. stakeholders. The Cal OES Warning Center also incorporated “international spill reporting” into their written operational procedures.

# Appendix C: DTSC and California Department of Pesticide Regulation

## DTSC: 2022 Look Ahead

In 2022, DTSC also conducted southbound truck stop inspections at the Customs and Border Protection Calexico East POE. Southbound truck stop inspections were conducted on May 18 and 19. Because of the inspections, 64 trucks were inspected for compliance with Federal and State Environmental Law and Regulations. Of the 64 trucks inspected; nine violations were issued and may result in one or two enforcement cases.

DTSC is an active participant in the Border 2025 binational meetings. In 2022, DTSC participated in a binational meeting where Border 2025 goals were discussed.

DTSC staff also has direct communication with Mexico's PROFEPA and SEMARNAT officials to request information on facilities operating south of the border that are importing hazardous waste and electronic waste from California. This open communication is essential for investigations and enforcement activities.

DTSC plans, organizes, and implements trainings regarding the import and export requirements for representatives from maquiladoras (export-oriented manufacturing and assembly plants), Mexican government officials, industry, and nongovernmental agencies. DTSC also provides support to USCBP on special projects related to imports and exports of hazardous waste and materials.

In 2022, DTSC in coordination with U.S. EPA provided a Hazardous Waste and Sustainable Materials Workshop. The workshop topics included: waste tires, electronic waste imports, U.S. EPA regulated waste imports and Baja California special waste regulations. There were 47 participants from industry and government agencies.

## Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)

### Spanish Radio/Television Pesticide Safety Public Service Announcement (PSA) Project

In 2021, DPR's Worker Health and Safety Branch (WHS) received a multi-purpose grant from U.S. EPA's Region 9 to continue broadcasting Spanish language public service announcements on pesticide safety, promoting DPR's pesticide incident reporting App, CASPIR. In Imperial County alone, a total of 256 announcements were broadcasted between September and November 2021, reaching Imperial County farmworkers and migrant farmworkers residing in Mexicali.

### Virtual Parent Regional Conference, San Diego County

On March 13, 2021, DPR staff participated in a virtual Parent Regional Conference session about pesticide safety in the field and around the home. This presentation was hosted by San Diego's Migrant Education Region 9. Participants had the opportunity to learn more about various pesticide safety topics including acute pesticide poisoning symptoms, how to report pesticide incidents, how to read and understand pesticide labels, and how to download and use the CASPIR App. Migrant Education is a federally funded program authorized



through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which was designed to provide supplementary educational and support services to identified migrant students. The Migrant Education Program Region 9 is administered through the San Diego County Office of Education and serves students in Orange and San Diego Counties.

### **Ride-along with County Inspectors, Imperial County**

On December 2, 2021, DPR staff joined a team of inspectors from the Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner's Office on a ride-along to learn more about implementing and enforcing the laws and regulations of Imperial's pesticide enforcement program. This ride-along helped the outreach representative to become more familiar with Imperial County's agriculture activities, to engage with inspectors and farm labor contractors, to understand more about fieldworkers' needs, and to learn important pesticide safety information to share with handlers, fieldworkers and their families during future outreach events.

### **Groundwater Monitoring**

In 2021, DPR sampled three groundwater wells in San Diego County for pesticide and pesticide degradation residues as part of the preliminary site section for Study 330: Development of Passive Sampling Methods and Non-target Screening of Agricultural Pesticides in Groundwater. Study 330 focused on the deployment of passive sampling devices at groundwater wells and analysis of groundwater samples with non-target analysis. The wells were located in Poway, CA and on the Campo Indian Reservation, also known as the Campo Kumeyaay Nation, near the U.S.-Mexico Border. No pesticide or pesticide degradation residues were detected in the

groundwater of these three wells. As a result, none of these sites were selected for deployment of a passive sampling device or further testing. Non-target results at these three sites have not yet been received from the laboratory.

### **Surface Water Monitoring**

#### **Agricultural Surface Water Monitoring**

DPR's Surface Water Protection Program collected surface water samples at six sites in Imperial County as part of the Southern California agricultural monitoring study. Surface water monitoring typically occurs during two time periods – early April and again in October. However, in 2021, due to travel concerns associated with the pandemic, sampling was only conducted in October. This sampling included both edge of field monitoring sites (e.g., agricultural drainage ditches) as well as main river locations (New River, Alamo River).

#### **Urban Surface Water Monitoring**

DPR routinely monitors pesticide residue at three sites within San Diego County, including one storm drain, one receiving water within the San Diego River watershed, and one receiving water within the Chollas Creek watershed. Water sampling is conducted during two dry-season events (June and August) and two-storm sampling events (first flush, early spring). In 2021, the sampling plan was modified due to travel concerns associated with the pandemic. Samples were collected at the San Diego River storm drain and Cholla Creek sites during one storm event and the receiving water location within San Diego River during one dry season event.

# Appendix D: Energy Engagement with States in Mexico

## Engagement with the State of Mexico City

CEC continues to engage in a robust exchange of information with Mexico's capital state of Mexico City (formerly a federal district). Under the leadership of its Chief of Government Claudia Sheinbaum, CEC has been actively engaged with Sedema, the Environmental Secretariat of the State of Mexico City, under an MOU signed in 2019 along with CalEPA. Sedema has taken an active role in working to update environmental and energy regulations to provide a robust template for other Mexican states to follow.

Work with Mexico City has focused on consulting with Sedema, in partnership with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, on policies related to building energy efficiency standards development and enforcement, rooftop solar policy, use of energy data in policy making, and other energy and environmental regulation issues.

Work with Mexico City has been entirely virtual since the beginning of the Covid pandemic; CEC and Sedema have desired to sign an updated MOU as part of an in-person meeting, however Covid has complicated these plans. While planning for an MOU renewal continues, CEC and Sedema continue to work together under the 2019 MOU.

## Engagement with the State of Jalisco

In early 2022, the CEC signed an MOU on clean energy cooperation with the State of Jalisco. This MOU was building off years of work with the Mexican federal energy agency, Sener, to fund energy efficiency projects through Mexico's science and technology council, CONACYT, resulting in the establishment of a lighting efficiency center at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara (UAG) in Jalisco, modeled after the California Lighting Technology Center (CLTC) housed at UC-Davis (which itself was originally funded by research and development grants from the California Energy Commission). CEC and State of Jalisco have developed a workplan to execute our MOU which focusses on sharing knowledge and information related to clean energy finance, Zero Emission Vehicles, building energy efficiency and other topics.

## Engagement with the State of Baja California

The CEC has engaged with the administration of Baja California Governor Marina del Pilar Ávila Olmeda since her coming into office in 2021. California and Baja California share a border, an electricity grid, and cross-border pollution impacts. The CEC developed a workplan with the Baja Energy Commission calling for cross-border collaboration on energy efficiency, industrial decarbonization, Zero Emission Vehicles and electric grid reliability. The California Independent System Operator (CAISO) will be a key partner in discussions on grid reliability. The Commission of the Californias (COMCAL), the 2019 agreement signed at the gubernatorial level by the states of California, Baja California and Baja California Sur, will be an important forum to continue this important relationship.



The logo consists of a vertical teal bar on the left and a dark green horizontal bar on the right, forming an L-shape. The text is located in the dark green bar.

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