2023

Annual Report

The California-Mexico Border Relations Council

A Summary of Activities Undertaken in 2023







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,

The California-Mexico border region shares family, culture, community, workforce, and countless economic and environmental resources. These connections create a shared sense of urgency to build a sustainable and resilient cross-border economy.

The California-Mexico Border Relations Council provides a critical forum for cross-border collaboration, allowing us to make important progress toward decreasing environmental burdens, addressing transboundary flows, and improving communication and engagement with



impacted communities. Strengthening our binational relationships and addressing our shared environmental challenges remain top priorities for California, as evidenced by the significant strides the California-Mexico Border Relations Council made in 2023, including:

- Collectively, the Border Relations Council Agencies invested over \$220 million in the border region in 2023.
 - CalRecycle provided nearly \$400,000 in Tire Clean Up and Tire Amnesty Grant to the border region. The grants helped remove over 16,000 waste tires from the Tijuana River Valley and from Imperial County.
 - Throughout 2023, HCD invested over \$218 million in Imperial and San Diego Counties across a variety of programs including the California Housing Accelerator, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, the Homekey, the Housing Navigators, and the Transitional Housing.
- GO-Biz participated in the establishment of the Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC), a federal-state partnership authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill to fight poverty by fostering economic development in the southern border regions of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.
- OEHHA continued to provide medical education on pesticide exposure illness
 to health professionals and to offer outreach and resources to practitioners
 including those working with Tribes. OEHHA is now working with Sacramento
 State University and in collaboration with the Tribal Pesticide Working Group,
 is creating a toolkit on pesticide illness that will be available to be tailored to
 the needs of Tribal health professionals and the patients they serve.

- To address transboundary flows of sewage and trash, the San Diego Water Board developed two Total Maximum Daily Load Alternatives (Advanced Restoration Plans or ARPs) in 2023 with Load Allocations to be achieved through the projects studied and approved by USEPA and IBWC in the June 9, 2023, Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. The ARP projects will be implemented via an interagency Memorandum of Understanding between 2024-2031.
- Through a joint effort, U.S. EPA and the Department of Energy established 16 Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers or TCTACs (ejtctac.org). They seek to improve federal grant processes and reduce barriers for funding through technical assistance to communities who have been historically underserved.
- The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) partnered with Radio Bilingüe to broadcast 910 Spanish and Mixteco Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on their radio network covering Calexico, El Centro, and some areas of Mexicali. These PSAs include information on what fieldworkers and the community can do in case of pesticide exposure, pesticide safety tips for fieldworkers, labor rights, DPR's role, and how to report pesticide incidents.

As this 2023 report illustrates, the California-Mexico Border Relations Council continues to play a vital role in addressing cross-cutting concerns affecting our border communities. Pursuant to Assembly Bill 3021 (Statutes of 2006), I am sharing this annual report of the California-Mexico Border Relations Council. We eagerly anticipate our continued cross-border collaboration as we work to accomplish more together.

Sincerely,

Yana Garcia

Secretary for Environmental Protection

A. Gana Garcia

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. To address 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 that 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 comprises 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



Toks Omishakin Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) calsta.ca.gov



Chair
Yana Garcia
Secretary, California
Environmental Protection
Agency (CalEPA)
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Tomiquia Moss Secretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) bcsh.ca.gov



Wade Crowfoot Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) resources.ca.gov



Dee Dee Myers
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Mark Ghaly Secretary, California Department of Health and Human Services (CHHS) chhs.ca.gov



Karen Ross
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Nancy Ward
Director, California
Governor's Office of
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Martha Guzman
Regional Administrator,
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Executive Summary

Trade

The 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,1 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 critical in each of these areas, as such the state has maintained its important collaboration with one of our most significant trade partners. California's economic relationship with Mexico is strategically managed by GO-Biz.

Business, Consumer Services, and Housing

The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) continues to support border communities with a focus on providing funding to preserve and expand housing, protecting consumers, and safeguarding civil rights. Departments within BCSH continue to engage with counterparts across the border to improve licensing and consumer services, engage with the community to safeguard civil rights, and invest in communities along the border to provide safe and stable homes.

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. In September 2024, Secretary Garcia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with her Baja California counterpart, Secretary Vega. The MOU will enable and foster a deeper partnership binationally, to reduce harmful emissions and waste tires across the border region.

¹ In February 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order designating Lt. Governor Kounalakis as his top representative to advance California's economic interests abroad (see Executive Order N-080-19)

Energy

The California Energy Commission (CEC) has enjoyed several decades of productive engagement with Mexico. In addition to being engaged in the continued success of the Lighting Technology Center at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, the CEC continues to engage in an exchange of best practices on clean energy policies with the capital state of Mexico City and the border region states of Baja California and Sonora. The CEC has an existing MOU with the state of Mexico City, signed with the Sheinbaum administration's energy secretariat in 2019 and in 2023. The MOU was developed in tandem with CalEPA and has a focus on the development and enforcement of building energy efficiency standards. The CEC is pursuing MOUs with the border region states of Baja California and Sonora. Engagement with Baja California and Sonora will focus on maintaining electric system reliability, nearshoring the manufacturing of components critical to the clean energy transition, industrial energy efficiency and electric vehicle charging deployment.

Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) continues engagement and collaboration with border counterparts on a wide variety of agricultural issues. Numerous divisions within the Department maintain a close working relationship with Mexico on shared border issues, including: the Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Division; the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division; the Animal Health and Food Safety Division as well as the Executive Office.

Transportation

California's international border crossings processed more than 16.8 million pedestrian crossings, 31.1 million personal vehicles, and over 1.6 million commercial trucks and the development of a new Otay Mesa East Port of Entry continued in 2023. Congestion at the border has limited travel and economic growth, as well as contributed to the effects of climate change. The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), Caltrans, SANDAG, and the United States and Mexican federal governments have partnered to address these challenges by designing an innovative border crossing facility, aiming to achieve a goal of an average wait time of 20 to 30 minutes and improve the safety, security, and efficiency of trade and travel between the United States and Mexico. In December 2023, CalSTA, Caltrans, and local leaders celebrated the completion of transportation infrastructure needed to support the future Otay Mesa East border crossing. The project includes the construction of State Route 11, three freeway interchange connectors and seven bridges, among other improvements, all of which have been built in Otay Mesa in the last four years.

Safety

Efforts to ensure border safety remained a top priority, primarily through the Operation Stonegarden Grant (OSPG) Program and the California Maritime Security Program. OSPG resulted in significant joint operational partnerships, narcotic seizures, arrests, citations, and more. These activities supported border security objectives by disrupting Transnational Crime Organizations within the region. Simultaneously, the California Maritime Security Program continued collaborating with the United States Coast Guard on maritime recovery, security, and intelligence.

Emergency Management

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) maintains strong partnerships with Mexico to address shared risks and vulnerabilities, recognizing the critical importance of cross-border cooperation in safeguarding communities on both sides. Proactive initiatives include monitoring sewage spills into the Tijuana River and notifying U.S. stakeholders, participating in critical discussions concerning public safety communications, and engaging local communities to enhance disaster preparedness, prioritizing equity, and accessibility through Listos California. Notably, in response to Hurricane Otis in Acapulco, Mexico, Cal OES coordinated the delivery of aid to the affected area. Moreover, during Tropical Storm Hilary in August 2023, Cal OES maintained ongoing communication with the Mexican states. Furthermore, from March 2021 to September 2023, the Unified Border Coordination Group provided humanitarian aid to asylum-seeking migrants entering California via the Mexico border.

Trade

Mexico continues to be California's primary export destination and its second-largest trade partner overall. Over 10% of all U.S. exports to Mexico originate from California – more than \$33.2 billion. Key exports from California to Mexico encompass computer and electronic goods, transportation equipment, non-electrical machinery, electrical products, and food-related items. Moreover, California handles over 12% of U.S. imports from Mexico (\$475.6 billion), including transportation equipment, computer and electronic items, agricultural products, electrical goods, appliances, and various manufactured commodities.

GO-Biz coordinated a number of trade initiatives with Mexico in 2023, including outbound trade missions, export support for California small businesses, and virtual exchanges by way of the California State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) and cross-border economic development funding. Notable activities included 1) a Study California education delegation where 11 institutions of higher education promoted education exports, sustainability, and environmental stewardship through academia; 2) a Water Infrastructure Technology Mission showcasing the tech and innovation of six California businesses for which the state of Baja CA can consider in their infrastructure projects; and 3) an inbound Aerospace Trade Mission from Mexico whereby ten California small businesses engaged with Mexican companies seeking partnerships in aerospace and engaged in market briefings.

California maintains a Trade and Services Desk in Mexico City through a partnership with the University of California's Casa de la Universidad de California. The desk supports GO-Biz's efforts to promote two-way trade and investment and further strengthens California's deep economic, political, and cultural relationship with the Americas. The desk is utilized by California's Trade and Investment Representative for the Americas to promote mutual trade and investment in the Americas region.

Foreign Investment

Mexican investment is significant in California, ranking as the 10th largest in terms of jobs supported, with 16,555 positions backed by 544 Mexican-owned businesses. These investments are strategically spread across various sectors such as wholesale trade, professional services, retail, food and clothing manufacturing, and mineral manufacturing. Geographically, these businesses support jobs throughout the state, notably in greater Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino, Sacramento, and Santa Clara counties. GO-Biz partners with the U.S. Embassy in Mexico to aid Mexican businesses expanding into California, offering regulatory guidance, incentives, and local partner connections.

International Engagement

In 2023, California engaged in virtual and in-person interactions, strengthening ties with Mexico at various levels. Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis played a key role in diplomatic engagements, focusing on the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry and meeting with Baja California Governor Marina del Pilar Avila Olmeda, former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, and the Mexican Ambassador to the U.S. Esteban Moctezuma on various issues impacting constituents on both sides of the border. California also hosted trade events aligned with the Commission of the Californias (ComCal), emphasizing sectors like infrastructure, environmental protection, manufacturing, and tourism. Another significant engagement included the California-Mexico 2030 Forum, organized by UC Alianza, which addressed climate economy transitions and celebrated the bicentennial of US-Mexico relations, with GO-Biz International and other state agencies actively participating. Additionally, GO-Biz has participated in the establishment of the Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC), a federal-state partnership authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill to fight poverty by fostering economic development in the southern border regions of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

Business, Consumer Services, and Housing

The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) and Departments within BCSH continue to support border communities with a focus on providing funding to preserve and expand housing, consumer protections, and safeguarding civil rights.

Providing Safe and Stable Homes

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) helps to provide stable, safe homes affordable to the people of California. Throughout 2023, HCD invested over \$218 million in Imperial and San Diego Counties across a variety of programs including the California Housing Accelerator, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, the Homekey, the Housing Navigators, and the Transitional Housing. HCD's Codes and Standards' Registration and Titling program provided in-person multi-lingual technical assistance to customers completing mobilehome and manufactured home registration and titling forms and processed applications in Imperial County.

The California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) supported California-Mexico border relations through multiple initiatives including homeownership, lender training and outreach, multifamily project financing, housing counseling and mortgage relief assistance. Through the Mortgage Relief program, 1,312 homeowners in San Diego and Imperial counties were assisted with a total value of \$34.6 million through mortgage relief, property taxes, partial claim/loan deferral and reverse mortgage. The National Mortgage Settlement counseling program also provided housing counseling services to 1,627 clients in San Diego and Imperial counties. CalHFA provided new financing for 760 units in San Diego. CalHFA provided financing for 348 homebuyers in San Diego and Imperial Counties, with a total value of \$184 million.

Consumer Protections

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) protects California consumers through oversight, enforcement, and licensure of professions. The Department consists of 36 boards and bureaus that regulate over three million licenses in more than 250 various professions and occupations. In 2023, DCA boards and bureaus collaborated with the government of Mexico in the following ways:

- The Licensed Physicians and Dentists from Mexico Pilot Program (MPP) allows up to 30 licensed physicians specializing in family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology from Mexico to practice medicine in California for a period not to exceed three years if certain requirements are met. These individuals are only authorized to work in specific nonprofit community health centers within California. The Medical Board issued its first MPP license in July 2021. As of November 2023, the Board has licensed all 30 physicians from Mexico, with 28 physicians practicing in California at four approved community health centers located in Hollister, Los Angeles, Salinas, and Tulare.
- As required by law, the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the University of California (UC) Davis, are conjointly conducting an evaluation of the program overseen by the Board, which will include the quality of care provided by the physicians, the adaptability of the physicians to California medical standards, the impact on the working and administrative environment in nonprofit community health centers and on interpersonal relations with co-workers, the response and approval by patients, the impact on cultural and linguistic services, and the increases in medical encounters provided by the physicians to limited-English-speaking patient populations and increases in the number of limited-English-speaking patients seeking health care services from nonprofit community health centers. On August 3, 2022, UC Davis submitted the first annual progress report to the Board. The second annual progress report was submitted on October 19,2023.
- The California State Athletic Commission (CSAC) participated in a virtual joint press conference coordinated by the Consulate of Mexico in San Diego. The press conference highlighted the partnership between CSAC, the Consulate, Mexico and the World Boxing Council (WBC) to reach former boxers who have a pension through CSAC's Boxers Pension Fund. The speakers relayed a positive sentiment of the Commission, discussed efforts to locate and support former fighters, and encouraged more retired fighters to claim their pension. The collaboration between the Consulate, WBC and CSAC is ongoing.
- DCA met with Deputy Consul General Vicente Sánchez Ventura and Vice Consul María Elena Arenas Mojica. The meeting provided an opportunity to share information about DCA and learn about Consulate areas of interest. The outcomes of the meeting include an opportunity for DCA to attend future Consulate educational events to provide resources and consumer publications.

Safeguarding Civil Rights

The Civil Rights Department (CRD) continues to safeguard civil rights and enforce laws against discrimination and hate violence. In San Diego and Imperial counties in 2023, CRD:

- Investigated 409 complaints of civil rights violations, conciliated many of these complaints, and secured \$676,475 for complainants and other types of relief in 49 settlements.
- Conducted civil rights trainings and outreach in the border region, including as part of the Mexican Consulate's resource fair in Calexico as well as a family health fair in Niland.
- Worked with local nonprofit organizations, local government, and the U.S.
 Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California to provide training
 about the resources available to Californians through the California vs Hate
 Resource Line and Network.
- Provided a variety of community conflict resolution services, including among tribal communities.
- Held a community forum with the Commission on the State of Hate at the University of San Diego as part of its efforts to develop recommendations to reduce hate violence in California.

Environmental Protection

CalEPA's Border Affairs Program

CalEPA's Border Affairs Program promotes cooperation to help 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. Accomplishments in 2023 include:

- CalRecycle grant funds were used to cleanup 20,161 tires from the California-Mexico Border Region. Additionally, CalRecycle conducted a study that identified illegal dumping sites.
- To address transboundary flows of sewage and trash, the San Diego Water Board developed two Total Maximum Daily Load Alternatives (Advanced Restoration Plans or ARPs) in 2023 with Load Allocations to be achieved through the projects studied and approved by USEPA and IBWC in the June 9, 2023, Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. The ARP projects will be implemented via an interagency Memorandum of Understanding between 2024-2031.
- Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) is embarking on a co-design approach through partnerships with environmental justice community-based organizations and interested Tribes for the fifth iteration of CalEnviroScreen
- The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) Air Program worked with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) residents to conduct a seasonal study of three high-use fumigants to better assess potential pesticide exposures during the high use season. DPR and OEHHA analyzed the results and will be providing the community with findings on potential exposure and health impacts.

Air Quality

As a part of the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) overall mission of protecting public health, welfare, and ecological resources through the effective reduction of air pollutants, CARB has continued its work in the border region to improve air quality in 2023. CARB furthered this goal through core programmatic functions including the California Climate Investments, Assembly Bill 617 Community Air Protection Program (CAPP), air quality research and planning, air quality monitoring, adopting new regulations to speed the transition to medium and heavy duty zero-emission vehicles, enforcement actions and settlements to reduce harmful emissions. Community-driven binational efforts, by CARB and

our Californian and Mexican community partners, are also ongoing to address and ameliorate exposure to harmful air emissions in a region with shared, international air basins. CARB has an important role to play in continuing to strengthen relationships with our Mexican counterparts to improve air quality outcomes. These efforts are described through this annual reporting process. CARB's newly refreshed California-Mexico border-specific webpage, is dedicated to providing information more broadly on border activities, and is updated regularly, is dedicated to providing information more broadly on border activities, and is updated regularly.

In 2023 CARB approved a first-of-its-kind rule that requires a phased-in transition toward zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, known as Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF). To meaningfully engage with the public and facilitate awareness and compliance with the new rule in the border region, CARB disseminates information on goods movement through land ports and also convenes working groups on these topics, discussed further below.

Since its inception and through the end of 2023, CARB's California Climate Investments program has implemented over \$1 billion in new projects in the border region, which are expected to reduce approximately 4,822,207 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e) over project lifetimes. Around \$799 million (or 80%) of those investment funds went toward benefitting priority populations (disadvantaged and low-income communities and households) in the border region.

Throughout 2023 CARB continued to address community air pollution issues across the border region through CAPP. Under AB 617, the Program's focus is to reduce exposure in communities most impacted by air pollution. AB 617 communities in the border region include:

- Eastern Coachella Valley
- North Imperial Phase 1 (Imperial North-End)
- Calexico, El Centro, Heber (Imperial Corridor)
- Portside Environmental Justice Neighborhoods
- San Diego International Border Community

Additionally, under the U.S. EPA's Border 2025 Program, the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) serves as the Co-Chair for the San Diego-Tijuana Air Quality Task Force, while the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) serves as the Co-Chair for the Imperial-Mexicali Air Quality Task Force. Together, these Task Forces coordinate with local stakeholders and CARB to explore measures to improve border region air quality, and this collaboration can lead to binational coordination of actions in San Diego and Imperial. Additional activities conducted in the San Diego and Imperial border regions in 2023 are described further in Appendix B: Additional Air Quality Efforts.

Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) is the lead entity within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) for assessing health risks posed by environmental chemicals. 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 report summarizes OEHHA's border-related activities in the year 2023.

Summary of Mexico Border Activities:

- Racial Equity and Environmental Justice
- CalEnviroScreen and DAC Designations
- Fish Consumption Advisories
- Harmful Algal Blooms
- Pesticide Illnesses Education

Racial Equity and Environmental Justice

OEHHA works to promote racial equity and environmental justice through our work products such as CalEnviroScreen, recruitment, and science communication. In 2023, our new Racial Equity and Environmental Justice (REEJ) Program Manager initiated an internal group known as the Racial Equity and Environmental Justice (REEJ) in Action Committee. The REEJ in action committee's goal is to advance OEHHA's work on racial equity and environmental justice by creating a cultural shift in our workplace, developing capacity-building tools, and fostering science for all communities.

Since then, the REEJ Program manager and the REEJ in Action Team led a World Cafe Brainstorming session with OEHHA staff and are currently developing OEHHA's REEJ in Action Plan. The main three components of this in Action Plan included cultural shift, capacity building tools, and science for all. As part of this brainstorming session staff contributed ideas to create actionable strategies for implementing the three components of the plan. This effort will include addressing and tracking border relations activities within each of the components of the plan.

The REEJ manager will coordinate the Border relations activities and will help identify OEHHA program areas that can help address the disproportionate impact of environmental challenges on border communities, especially those with predominantly minority populations. The REEJ manager will also help develop an internal framework for how OEHHA's racial equity and environmental justice work supports and fosters a more inclusive approach to border relations.

OEHHA is in the process of hiring additional positions that will aid in our understanding of pollution impacts in the border region. One of the positions will help develop methods to assess cumulative impacts and the other positions will track changes and trends using CalEnviroScreen data to evaluate equity and progress in pollution reductions in disadvantaged communities including Latino or Spanish monolingual speaking communities in and near border areas.

California Environmental Justice Screening Tool – CalEnviroScreen

OEHHA develops CalEnviroScreen, an environmental justice mapping tool used to identify California communities burdened by multiple sources of pollution and vulnerable its effects. The last update to CalEnviroScreen was in 2021. The forthcoming fifth update to CalEnviroScreen will use a co-design approach through partnerships with environmental justice community-based organizations and interested Tribes who would like to participate.

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 was released in 2021 and includes the incorporation of pollution sources originating in Mexico on California communities located near the border. Examples of border related data in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 include 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.

CalEPA uses CalEnviroScreen to designate disadvantaged communities (DACs), areas prioritized for California Climate Investments, many of which are located near the border. Communities with high CalEnviroScreen scores and lands under the control of federally recognized tribes, including tribes near or around the border with Mexico, are eligible for funding as DACs. The last update to the DAC designation was 2022. In 2023, OEHHA consulted with three tribes to add additional lands under their control to the DAC map.

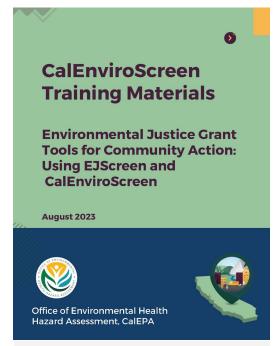


DACs near the Mexico Border

In 2023, OEHHA's CalEnviroScreen program partnered with the US EPA on a first of its-kind joint training on CalEnviroScreen and EJ Screen for Community Action. The two trainings provided background information on the tools as well as demonstrations on how the tools can be used to support environmental justice grant applications.

Fish Consumption Advisories Provided for the Border Region

OEHHA's fish advisories provide "safe eating guidelines" that recommend how often people can safely eat fish caught from California water bodies, including waters near the border. They are based on sampling results for persistent chemicals in common fish species that people catch and eat from California water bodies. The advisories are available at oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories.



OEHHA's CalEnviroScreen Training Materials – Environmental Justice Grant Tools for Community Action: Using EJ Screen and CalEnviroScreen August 2023.

OEHHA evaluates the health risks from chemical contaminants in fish tissue to consumers of recreationally fish 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. Fish advisories are posted on OEHHA's website in both English and Spanish and published in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Sport Fishing Regulations booklets under the "Public Health Advisory" section. OEHHA's fish advisories provide "safe eating guidelines" to help people choose the safest fish to eat and avoid fish species that contain high levels of chemicals. They are based on sampling results for fish species that are commonly caught and eaten from California water bodies. OEHHA released a new fish consumption advisory for San Diego County's Lake Morena located near the US-Mexico border.

OTHER NEW ADVISORIES INCLUDE:

- Crowley Lake (Mono County)
- South Lake (Inyo County)

ADDITIONAL BORDER REGION FISH ADVISORIES

Imperia	San Diego County	
Alamo River	Senator Wash Reservoir	El Capitan
All-American Canal	Squaw Lake	Lake Cuyamaca
Ferguson Lake	Sunbeam Lake	Lake Henshaw
New River	Taylor Lake	Mission Bay
Salton Sea	Wiest Lake	San Diego Bay

OEHHA also released the technical document titled Process to Identify High Contaminant Water Bodies to Prioritize Monitoring for Fish Advisory Development that describes how and why water bodies are prioritized for monitoring efforts. OEHHA performs an annual data review and assesses multiple criteria, including input from the CalEnviroScreen tool, to prioritize high contaminant water bodies.

Harmful Algal Blooms

OEHHA is a member of the Interagency Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB)-related Illness Workgroup,

which investigates and tracks



An example fish advisory (Lake Morena) presented in Spanish

potential HAB-related illnesses in humans and animals throughout California. The workgroup also includes staff from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This group recently updated the web pages and fact sheets for freshwater (English and Spanish) and marine (English and Spanish) HAB-related resources. OEHHA recommends that people who recreationally catch and consume fish from California water bodies check the California HAB Reports Map for an active HAB advisory each time before going out to fish.

Pesticides Related Illness

Pesticide exposure is a pressing issue for farmworker communities, many of which have large populations of immigrants from Mexico. Many healthcare providers may not possess adequate knowledge about the health risks associated with pesticides. This knowledge gap hinders their ability to provide informed care to affected individuals. The focus of the OEHHA's educational efforts is on how to diagnose and identify environmental exposure to pesticides and for health professionals to learn about the symptoms and how to treat them. OEHHA's audience is large and includes clinicians, community health workers, and other health care providers serving farmworker communities across the state. Key to this work is acknowledging that California farmworkers are predominately immigrants from Mexico and mostly Spanish monolingual speaking.

In 2023, OEHHA continued to provide medical education on pesticide exposure illness to health professionals and to offer outreach and resources to practitioners including those working with Tribes. A framework and process to support this work is needed to ensure health providers on both sides of the border have access to up-to-date resources and education on pesticide-related illnesses. With adequate support, agencies like OEHHA can play a pivotal role in disseminating this information and supporting providers in their patient education efforts.

Water

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards), collectively known as the California Water Boards (Water Boards), are dedicated to a single vision: abundant clean water for human uses and environmental protection to sustain California's future.

The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board regulate water quality in California along the California-Mexico border. Both Regional Boards made notable progress in 2023 to address pollution in transboundary rivers that flow from south to north.

Transboundary River Flows/Water Quality

The State Water Resources Control Board collaborated with partners, including members of the International Border Water Commission and the California-Mexico Border Relations Council, to support implementation and urge additional funding for water quality improvement projects to address bacteria, sediment, and trash pollution.

State Water Resources Control Board continues to support the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board in its efforts to address transboundary flows causing pollution in state coastal waters and closing beaches.

The State Water Resources Control Board participated in development of a binational emergency response guide to address flooding emergencies caused by debris and waste discharges in the Tijuana River watershed and causing transboundary flows. The Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve convened the planning effort that included multiple local, state, and federal agencies with interest and authority to protect the estuary and surrounding lands from pollution and ecosystem degradation.

NEW RIVER

The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Colorado River Basin 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 Colorado River Basin Water Board also implemented its regulatory programs to address New River pollution sources in the Imperial County, and to assist the City of Calexico with the execution of the New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan. The Colorado River Basin 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.

The State Water Board also manages the following projects that it funded in 2023 to address water quality problems arising in the rivers crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. These projects are all in progress as planned except for the New River Preliminary Engineering Report, which is awaiting co-funding from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

To benefit the New River:

- Mexicali Fluye Project (Sonoran Institute, \$4,323,789)
 - The project will implement in-stream treatment wetlands along a three-mile demonstration site to improve the water quality of the New River in Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico, which flows into California, and develop a Master Plan for four (4) river miles along the New River by integrating lessons learned from the demonstration site and providing a plan to replicate nature-based solutions. This project will include restoration of polluted drains that feed the New River.
- New River Improvement Project (City of Calexico, \$18,530,047)
 - This project addresses water quality problems in the New River, which flows north across the US-Mexico Border through the cities of Mexicali (south of the border) and Calexico (north of the border). The New River carries trash, raw sewage, industrial waste, and agricultural runoff when it crosses the border into the United States.
- New River Preliminary Engineering Report (Imperial County, \$167,000)
 - This Project will prepare a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) to determine best options for a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Imperial County to treat pollution from Mexico to insure the New River meets California Water Quality Standards.

TIJUANA RIVER

In 2023, transboundary pollution in the Tijuana River, Estuary and near shore coastal waters has reached levels not experienced since 1996. Excessive sedimentation and storm inflow and infiltration flows from Mexico have crippled the International and Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) and caused violations of effluent limitations throughout 2022 and 2023. The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board issued Time schedule Order R9-2023-0189 to IBWC to ensure compliance with Clean Water Act NPDES Permit requirements. The IBWC SBIWTP is on schedule to return to compliance after over \$30 million in repairs are scheduled to be completed by August 15, 2024. To address transboundary flows of sewage and trash, the San Diego Water Board developed two Total Maximum Daily Load Alternatives (Advanced Restoration Plans or ARPs) in 2023 with Load Allocations to be achieved through the projects studied and approved by USEPA and IBWC in the June 9, 2023, Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. The ARP projects will be implemented via an interagency Memorandum of Understanding between 2024-2031.

Status of Border Transboundary Flows and Water Quality Impacts

Throughout 2023, the Tijuana River entering the U.S. has ranged from 30 million gallons per day and over. Since October 2023, over 31.3 billion gallons of sewage polluted river flows have impacted San Ysidro (a Disadvantaged Community) and Imperial Beach and resulted in beach closures for 886 consecutive days as of May 2024. The Tijuana River flows are the ongoing infrastructure failures in Tijuana. Significant public health risks were described in research by San Diego State University and reported in the October 2023 Coastal Commission Meeting in Imperial Beach on border pollution.



Permanent Beach Closure South Imperial Beach Photo Credit David Gibson October 3, 2023

Storm flows in 2022-23 included 12 Atmospheric River Events that resulted in flows as high as 23,000,000 cubic feet per second in the Tijuana River. The storm flows deposited trash and debris throughout the Tijuana River Valley and destroyed several local berms, the State Parks trash boom in Goat Canyon, and agency flood control measures implemented after Tropical Cyclone Hilary in 2022.

In 2023, the flows from Mexico in Smuggler's Gulch and Goat Canyon include excessive amounts of sediment and debris from a major highway construction project. The sedimentation has caused the failure of the canyon collectors operated by IBWC to control transboundary flows of sewage and industrial wastes.

Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board continues to support and lead the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (Recovery Team) consisting of more than 30 state, federal and local agencies and non-governmental organizations. In 2023, three Recovery Team Projects were funded by the State Water Resources Control Board through SB170 funds described above.

In 2024, the Recovery Team is focusing collaborative multiagency efforts on sedimentation, water quality, and trash and debris damage in the Tijuana River Valley caused by the Atmospheric River Events flooding in 2023 and 2024. Several local berms were breached by high flows and flooding caused damage to the County of San Diego Campground and the Regional Park. Local agencies are planning clean up and flood control improvements and the IBWC assisted the Recovery Team efforts to address storm trash and debris by removing 578 tons of trash and debris from the Tijuana River flood control channel. The IBWC is also working with the Rural Community Assistance Center on access in the flood control channel for the installation of the SB170 funded trash boom in 2024.

The cornerstone project of the Recovery Team, the reclamation of the Nelson Sloan quarry by California State Parks, is in progress. State Parks certified the Environmental Impact Report in 2023 and submitted the Report of Waste Discharge to the San Diego Water Board in April 2024. The reclamation and restoration project will use clean sediment harvested from water quality basins and estuary restoration projects in the Tijuana River watershed to reclaim the quarry and restore critically needed upland habitat for California Gnatcatcher and other native species.

International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant

IBWC South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) treats 25 MGD of sewage received from Tijuana and discharges it to the Pacific Ocean three miles offshore via the South Bay Ocean Outfall. The SBIWTP has been in violation of NPDES Permit requirements for secondary effluent treatment standards since September 2021. The San Diego Water Board has issued 7 notices of violation to IBWC. In December 2023, San Diego Water Board adopted Time Schedule Order R9-2023-0189 requiring IBWC to return to compliance for secondary effluent treatment standards by August 15, 2024. In July 2024, the San Diego Water Board denied an IBWC's request for an extension to this deadline, underscoring that repairs and expansion cannot wait. The San Diego Regional Water Board will assess compliance formally in October 2024 and consider further steps. . Staff from the San Diego Water Board are meeting weekly with IBWC and its contractor Veolia and inspecting the repair work on the SBIWTP.



Inoperable Primary Sedimentation Basin SBIWTP Photo Credit: David Gibson October 5, 2023

Tijuana River Total Maximum Daily Load Alternatives (Advanced Restoration Plans) for Bacterial Indicators and Trash.

In 2023, the San Diego Water Board completed two Total Maximum Daily Load alternatives (USEPA "Advanced Restoration Plans" or ARPs) for the Tijuana River and tributaries for bacterial indicators (sewage) and solid waste (trash) originating in Mexico and flowing into the United States in the Tijuana River Valley. The San Diego Water Board prepared the ARPs and calculated Load Allocations in consultation with the USEPA and received comments and questions from stakeholders at two public workshops in February 2024. The San Diego Water Board expects to adopt the Advanced Restoration Plans in mid-2024 and implement them through a Memorandum of Understanding with USEPA, IBWC, and Customs and Border Protection. The Load Allocations identified for bacterial indicators and trash will be achieved through the implementation of the June 9, 2023 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision (Projects A- D and Project J) and source control projects for sewering infrastructure in Tijuana implemented through the Treaty Minutes 320 and 328 between 2024 and 2031.

The State Water Board manages the following projects to benefit the Tijuana River:

- Smuggler's Gulch Dredging Project (County of San Diego, \$4,250,000)
 - The Project will remove trash and sediments that have accumulated within the Smuggler's Gulch and Pilot Channel of the Tijuana River over years of transboundary flows coming from Mexico, including a full-scale dredging effort throughout the entirety of Smuggler's Gulch and disposal of the dredged materials. This Project will complement the currently funded Smuggler's Gulch Improvements Project, being implemented by the County, in partnership with the City of San Diego, which will construct a sediment basin and permanent trash capture devices within Smuggler's Gulch.



Sediment from Mexico blocking Smuggler's Gulch Canyon Collector.

Photo Credit: Morgan Rogers, IBWC April 1, 2024. Used with Permission.

- Brown Property Restoration Project (County of San Diego, \$2,000,000)
 - The Project will restore the Brown Property, a contaminated property acquired by the County in 2009. The Project will improve water quality by removing trash and invasive species and restore the Tijuana River to its native habitat. The Project will include demolition of on-site structures, restoration of the approximately seven-acre property to native upland coastal sage scrub habitat, and short-term maintenance and monitoring of the restoration site.
- Tijuana River Trash Booms Project (Rural Community Assistance Corporation, \$4,729,164)
 - This Project will support the design, manufacture, deployment, installation, operation, and maintenance of trash booms in the Tijuana River channel in San Diego County. The purpose of the trash booms is to reduce nonpoint source trash flows and improve water quality in the Tijuana River Valley.

Waste Tires

CalRecycle is a department within CalEPA. Its Tire Management Program is faced with the challenge of diverting from disposal and safely managing more than 51 million reusable and waste tires generated each year in California. CalRecycle grant funds were used to cleanup 20,161 tires from the California-Mexico Border Region. Additionally, CalRecycle conducted a study that identified illegal dumping sites.

CalRecycle's Five-Year Tire Plan outlines opportunities for work in the Border Region and can be found at Publication Summary. In 2023, CalRecycle carried out the following

San Diego County Urban Corps members standing at Goat Canyon in safety gear. 10-20-2023

activities in the California-Mexico Border Region:

• CalRecycle and the Urban Corps of San Diego County (Urban Corps), a Local Conservation Corps (LCC), carried out cleanup efforts in 2023 on California Border Field State Park (Goat Canyon Project). Urban Corps picked up approximately 4,800 tires from the Border Field State Park as pictured in the below Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3. During this cleanup, the partnership was conducted with California State Parks who granted access to the land. Urban Corps is planning on resuming the tire cleanup by the end of July 2024 due to funding being exhausted.

- Tire Clean Up (TCU) Grants Awarded to Diego was awarded \$59,669 and utilized their CalRecycle TCU19 Grant to remove tires from the Tijuana River Valley and other border area totaling approximately 3,602 tires removed and disposed.
- Tire Clean Up (TCU) Grants
 Awarded to Imperial County Imperial County was awarded
 \$250,000 and utilized their
 CalRecycle TCU19 Grant to remove
 13,187 tires from roadsides, public
 lands and various illegal dumps in
 the border region.
- Tire Amnesty (TA) Grant award to Imperial County – Imperial County was awarded \$90,000 and will utilize their TA7 Grant to hold tire amnesty events.
- Report published March 2023 Investigation of Illegal Tire Dumping
 Sites along the Southern California Mexico Border: CalRecycle
 undertook an investigation to
 identify and locate illegal tire
 dumping sites along the Southern
 California-Mexico border with the
 support of Geo-Logic Associates
 (GLA). The investigation was
 conducted on the US side of the



Urban Corps of San Diego County GOAT CANYON Clean up Tire Pile 10-20-2023



Urban Corps of San Diego County GOAT CANYON Clean Up Equipment 12-05-2023

border region and consisted of information gathering through interviews with regional stakeholders and field assessments to locate illegal tire dumping sites. CalRecycle Cleanup Program staff will be reaching out to stakeholders identified in the report with information regarding waste tire cleanup resources at CalRecycle.

- In continuing to carry our responsibilities under Statutes of 2015, Senate Bill (SB) 83 (Government Code section 99523(c)), to coordinate long-term solution to address issues waste and waste tires along the border, CalRecycle regularly participated in related coordination meetings as described below.
 - CalRecycle participated in the USEPA Border 2025 Regional Coordinators meeting on January 24, 2023.
 - CalRecycle responded to border related questions from California Assemblyman Alvarez in May of 2023.

- CalRecycle met with staff from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the USEPA Region IX to review CalRecycle's Tire Program.
- CalRecycle participated in the CalEPA CA-MX Border Relations Council meeting on October 23, 2023.
- And, on December 5, 2023, CalRecycle participated in the USEPA Border Waste Task Force Meeting which included a follow up meeting with the new USEPA contact Marisol Anaya

Pesticides

Air Monitoring and Community Engagement

The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) Air Program worked with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) residents to conduct a seasonal study of three high-use fumigants to better assess potential pesticide exposures during the high use season. DPR provided information on pesticide usage in the area and contributed to the study's design, including timing and selection of sampling locations. This intensive 13-week air monitoring study sampled for 1,3-Dichlopropene, MITC, and Chloropicrin at three locations (Mecca Fire Station, Torres Martinez air monitoring site, and Thermal Fire Station) in the ECV area. DPR and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) analyzed the results and will be providing the community with findings on potential exposure and health impacts.



Scientific-Aid Tou Vang and Sr. Environmental Scientist Pedro Lima sampling surface water at an established site (Imp_Garst) in Imperial County as part of the Southern California agricultural monitoring study.



Scientific-Aid Tou Vang conducting surface water sampling at an established site (Imp_Holtville) in Imperial County as part of the Southern California agricultural monitoring study. Samples were analyzed to assess short-term changes and long-term trends of pesticide concentrations in surface water resulting from agricultural runoff and their potential impact to the surrounding aquatic environments.

Agricultural and Urban Surface Water Monitoring

As part of the continuous evaluation process, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) Surface Water Protection Program collects surface water samples twice per year at

long-term monitoring sites in Imperial (agricultural) and San Diego (urban) counties. Monitoring locations include agricultural drainage ditches, urban storm drains, and receiving waters including New River, Alamo River, and Chollas Creek. Samples are analyzed for ~81 pesticides and results are evaluated for potential impacts to

the environment. Location-specific water quality results are shared with stakeholders through annual updates to the DPR Surface Water Database (SURF).

Public Service Announcements for Farmworker Health and Safety

The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) partnered with Radio Bilingüe to broadcast 910 Spanish and Mixteco Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on their radio network covering Calexico, El Centro, and some areas of Mexicali. These PSAs include information on what fieldworkers and the community can do in case of pesticide exposure, pesticide safety tips for fieldworkers, labor rights, DPR's role, and how to report pesticide incidents.

Additionally, DPR partnered with Pulpo Media and Lotus Media to stream digital radio spots targeting Calexico, El Centro, Imperial Valley, and the North San Diego via Spotify. The display ads/banner ads will run on mobiles, desktops, and tablet devices appearing on sites commonly visited by target demographics. The ad will also be delivered online via streaming platforms targeting Imperial, Calexico, and El Centro.

44th Annual Farm Workers Appreciation Breakfast

On December 1, 2023, DPR staff, the Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner and staff, and representatives from USEPA Region 9 participated in the 44th Annual Farm Workers Appreciation Breakfast to provide information and resources on pesticide safety, reporting methods, and labor rights to thousands 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. USEPA Region 9 staff shared outreach materials on pesticides protection, healthy homes, asthma prevention, and environmental enforcement as well as 1,200 bandanas. These are marked with the appropriate phone number to call when exposed to pesticides.

Toxics

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). DTSC has recently put extra emphasis on tracking imported and exported wastes. In 2023, DTSC received 47 export notifications through its Program database. Notices were reviewed and receiving 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 4,148 trucks inspected, with seven Summary of Violations issued to importers of record and/or transporters.

DTSC staff also has ongoing 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.

Natural Resources

Border Field State Park

CA State Parks (CSP) operates the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) through a strategic partnership that includes funding and oversight from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Other key partners in TRNERR operations are the non-profit Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association (SWIA) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Together, these organizations leverage specific resources to implement the core programs of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) of Research, Education, Coastal Training, and Stewardship, and to carry out core functions of the reserve associated with facilities, enforcement, staffing, and land management. The TRNERR encompasses the western 2,500acres of the Tijuana River Valley.

Key initiatives and significant occurrences from the TRNERR for the Calendar year of 2023 include:

Tropical Storm Hilary and Border Field State Park Closure

Tropical Strom Hilary moved through the San Diego region in August, 2023, resulting in damages to the sewage treatment infrastructure along the border, including the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant infrastructure elements that divert low flow spills in the Tijuana River canyon tributaries of Smuggler's Gulch and Goat Canyon. As a result of this damage approximately 2 million gallons/day of sewage was released through Border Field State Park. Despite IBWC efforts to repair the system, these canyon tributaries saw only minor and intermittent relief from these flows and Border Field State Park remained closed to the public through the end of the calendar year and into 2024.

TRNERR System Wide Monitoring Program

The TRNERR's System Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) site-based monitoring data provides more than twenty-five years of standardized, quantitative measures to determine how conditions are changing in the short and long term. Abiotic parameters collected through this program include nutrients, temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed/direction, and precipitation. Starting in 2023, this monitoring program documented extended periods of significant water quality impairment in the Tijuana Estuary. Biological monitoring conducted by researchers from U.C. Santa Barbara also documented very low abundances of fish and aquatic invertebrates. The cross-border pollution is causing significant habitat loss due to sedimentation, lack of tidal exchange, and low oxygen levels that are significantly impacting fish, shellfish, and other wildlife across the Estuary, and these impacts are being documented through these monitoring efforts.

Goat Canyon Sediment Basin Maintenance

CA State Parks again allocated approximately \$1.9 million toward the annual maintenance of the Goat Canyon Sediment Basins, allowing for the capture and removal of 20,000 cubic yards of sediment and over 50 tons of solid waste. Maintenance costs have risen significantly in the last 7 years and it is estimated that approximately \$6 million is needed annually to maintain the basins to design specification. Limited funding to address this pollution has also resulted in a 50,000 cubic yard sediment stockpile on site within Boder Field State Park with an estimated cost of approximately \$5 million to haul off site.

Goat Canyon Trash Booms

NOAA's Marine Debris Program awarded CA State Parks approximately \$270,000 for needed improvements to the Goat Canyon trash booms- a facility that captures solid waste in transboundary flows. Various approaches to trash capture have been implemented by CA State Parks in Goat Canyon since 2011.

Marine Debris Leadership Academy

The TRNERR Coastal Training Program (CTP) launched the inaugural Marine Debris Leadership Academy (MDLA) supported by the ResiDuos project ("Improving socio-ecological resilience through marine debris prevention and removal in the U.S.-Mexico") funded by the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement and NOAA's Marine Debris Program. Through an eight-week program (across months July and August) that emphasized dimensions of adaptive leadership including expanding ways of knowing, spanning boundaries, and developing and deepening relationships, more than 40 local leaders were brought together as a binational cohort to amplify their efforts in addressing solid waste and marine debris challenges in both the U.S. and Mexico sections of the Tijuana River watershed.

Binational Emergency Response Guide

The TRNERR Coastal Training Program initiated the development of the Binational Emergency Response Guide (BERG) as a component of the ResiDUOS project and funded by the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement and NOAA's Marine Debris Program. The establishment of a BERG emerged as a prioritized initiative through collaborative efforts among U.S. and Mexico agencies and stakeholders, facilitated by CTP during multiple binational workshops. This increased engagement has enhanced understanding of the local, state, and federal response frame works essential for facilitating a coordinated, well-managed, and prompt emergency response to incidents of debris-related flooding. The BERG is scheduled to be complete in 2024.

National Geographic's Preserving Legacies

TRNERR's Coastal Training Program is serving as site custodians in the National Geographic's Preserving Legacies program, a global effort to protect cultural and natural heritage in the context of community-based climate resilience. TRNERR is the sole site in the United States and unique in its landscape typology. Strategic planning to integrate Preserving Legacies efforts across other CTP initiatives is underway, including expanding and deepening the application of cultural ecosystem services in estuary stewardship and management, enhancing cultural dimensions of a vulnerability assessment for Border Field State Park with the State Historic Preservation Office and Scripps Institution of Oceanography, building capacity in a multinational watershed, and in implementation of the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program.

Supporting Green Infrastructure in Baja California

TRNERR's Coastal Training Program offered continuous technical assistance to coastal decision-makers in local governments in both the U.S. and Mexico. This resulted in green infrastructure approaches being adopted in the Baja California state regulations, achieved through close collaboration with the Consejo Estatal de Protección al Ambiente.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Program

CA State Parks allocating approximately \$90,000/year through a five-year program to control the invasive non-native giant reed (Arundo donax) in Border Field State Park. The effort is funded by CA State Parks Wildfire and Forest Resilience Program.

Climate Change Adaptation Planning

CA State Parks drafted a climate change vulnerability and adaptation plan for Border Field State Park.

EPECG

CA State Parks served on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Eligible Public Entities Coordinating Group to advise on the development of infrastructure solutions to Tijuana River watershed transboundary pollution through the implementation of the USMCA Comprehensive Infrastructure Solution Projects.

Minute 320

CA State Parks served on the International Boundary and Water Commission's Minute 320 Binational Core Group, and also contributed to the water quality, sediment and solid waste working groups.

Fish and Wildlife

Throughout 2023, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) continued its coordination with the California-Mexico Border Relations Council and its stakeholders, including holding an outreach event in San Diego in May 2023 to highlight existing funding opportunities and to introduce new funding initiatives under Drought, Climate Resilience, and Nature Based Solutions. In June 2023, CDFW awarded \$365,232 to River Partners for the Holtville Alamo River Trail Expansion and Habitat Restoration Planning Project. To date, CDFW has awarded approximately \$4.4 million under its cross-border priority, including \$2.6 million for four planning projects, and \$1.8 million for one implementation project.

Holtville Alamo River Trail Expansion and Habitat Restoration Planning Project (Grantee: River Partners)

Awarded in 2023 with one-time new initiative grant funding for Addressing Climate Impacts, the project is currently underway and will complete the planning and design to restore 70 acres of riparian habitat and construct a multi-use trail in Imperial Valley along the Alamo River within City of Holtville.

Tijuana River Valley Invasive Plant Species Removal and Restoration Program (Grantee: San Diego County)

This project recently closed and completed planning steps necessary for future restoration efforts to address invasive plant populations and remedy the resulting environmental issues. The Habitat Restoration Plan is complete and was submitted to the permitting agencies as part of the permit applications. Additionally, the CEQA document for this project is complete.

Tijuana River Valley Regional Park Brown Fill Restoration Project (Grantee: San Deigo County)

This project to create designs and the complete environmental review for future restoration in the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park is nearing completion. The design plans will allow for the future removal of accumulated sediment, debris, and vegetation from the Tijuana River Valley and the Smuggler's Gulch Channel. The CEQA documents have been finalized, the design plans are complete, and permitting coordination continues.

Alamo and New Rivers Riparian Habitat Restoration Planning and Permitting Project (Grantee: River Partners)

This planning project recently closed and will lead to restoration of riparian habitat in the Imperial Valley. The project was 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. Efforts during the project included seed collection, an invasive species management strategy, and preparation of a restoration plan.

Phase 1 Finney-Ramer Unit Habitat Restoration Project (Grantee: River Partners)

This project is ongoing and is designed to replace invasive plant populations and bare ground with self-sustaining native vegetation that 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. The project began with the grantee completing surveys of project fields, submitting permit applications, and collecting soil samples to calibrate a field preparation soil amendment application.

State Coastal Conservancy

The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) has a 40+ year history of working side by side with land managers in the Tijuana River Valley to develop, plan, fund, implement, and manage conservation, restoration and public access projects. We continue to participate in multiple partnerships of state, federal and local stakeholders to achieve the strategic objectives of the Conservancy, as well as those of our partners. The following is an update of SCC's project efforts pertaining to the U.S. and Mexico border region for the 2023 calendar year. SCC staff contributes regularly to these projects.

Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II (TETRP II)

SCC granted \$340,000 (2017) and \$3.192 million (2023) to Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association to support planning related to TETRP II Phase 1, a tidal prism and wetland restoration in the Tijuana River Estuary. CEQA and NEPA compliance was completed in 2023 and the grant for final design and permit acquisition was awarded and initiated.

Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration Project

SCC granted \$250,000 in 2017, and an additional \$250,000 in 2020, to the California Department of Parks and Recreation to support environmental compliance and the development of a use agreement for restoration of the abandoned Nelson Sloan Quarry in the Tijuana River Valley (TRV). The project is anticipated to be an important part of sediment management in the TRV and this phase of planning will be completed in early 2025. CEQA and NEPA compliance was completed in 2023.

Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management Work Plan and Monitoring Program

SCC granted \$500,000 to the City of Imperial Beach in 2020 to prepare a Sediment Management Work Plan and Monitoring Program for the TRV. This priority project of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT) identified current and potential sources of excess sediment as well as current and potential re-use alternatives to reduce management costs. The project was completed in 2023.

Tijuana River Valley - Smugglers Gulch Improvements Project

SCC granted \$10 million to the County of San Diego in 2021 to develop final design plans and construct the Smugglers Gulch Improvements Project at the intersection of Smugglers Gulch and Monument Road in the TRV adjacent the border with Mexico. This project will help to reduce sediment and trash inputs to the TRV and has an expected completion date of late 2027.

Tijuana River Valley Coastal Trail River Crossing Feasibility Project:

SCC granted \$346,000 to the County of San Diego in 2020 to study the feasibility of a safe and reliable multi-use river crossing in the TRV 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. This phase of the project is expected to be completed in 2024.

Other Work

SCC and State Parks staff co-represent CNRA in the **USMCA's Eligible Public Entities Coordinating Group (EPECG)**, which informed the selection of a preferred alternative for infrastructure improvements to help prevent impaired water, sediment and trash from crossing the Border into the TRV.

SCC staff serves on the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team steering committee, which aims to improve the water quality and ecology of the TRV.

SCC staff serves on the **Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve** (**TRNERR**) Advisory Council. TRNERR preserves, protects, and manages the natural and cultural resources of the Tijuana River Estuary by creating opportunities for education and research while promoting public access for recreation throughout the Reserve.

SCC staff worked closely with California Coastal Commission staff and State Parks staff on an informational briefing and site tour regarding the ongoing transboundary pollution crisis in the Tijuana River and Tijuana River Valley that was presented at the Coastal Commission's October 2023 meeting in Imperial Beach.

SCC staff worked with US Navy Region Southwest, the Port of San Diego, and many other stakeholders to develop an application for designation of the **San Diego Bay to Border Sentinel Landscape**, which, if awarded, would help to direct federal resources to the prioritized mutual goals of the landscape partners, including many in the Tijuana River Valley border region. This effort will continue into 2024.

Coastal Commission

The California Coastal Commission (CCC) is committed to protecting and enhancing California's coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally-sustainable development, rigorous use of science, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination.

In 2023, the CCC organized a site visit for members of the public, press, stakeholders and agency and elected officials to the Tijuana River Valley and convened a day-long informational briefing in Imperial Beach on the status and impacts of the Tijuana River pollution crisis, including information on its environmental, public health and economic impacts in south San Diego County and the need for immediate action to help address it. Speakers and presenters included Lieutenant Governor, Eleni Kounalakis; Secretary for Environmental Protection, Yana Garcia; Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner of the U.S. Section of the International Border and Water Commission; U.S. EPA Deputy Regional Administrator, Charee Peterson; as well as numerous state and local agency representatives, researchers, and public health practitioners.

In May of 2023, the CCC also voted unanimously to authorize the U.S. EPA's United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement Mitigation of Contaminated Transboundary Flows Project to improve sewage and wastewater treatment in the Tijuana River Valley, including through expansion of existing wastewater treatment capacity, upgrades to collection and transport systems, and construction of a 35-million gallon per day Advanced Primary Treatment Plant for ocean discharge. The CCC has also acted to include informational updates and discussions of the Tijuana River Valley pollution crisis on its monthly hearing agenda and has prepared and sent letters to President Biden, Governor Newsom, and U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken advocating for immediate action and additional funding needed to enhance infrastructure and prevent and reduce sewage flows and contamination in Southern California through design and construction efforts at the federally-operated South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (ITP) in San Diego County.

CalFire

The initiatives between CAL FIRE and Mexico are presented below and a demonstrate a wide array of CAL FIRE programs and abilities. One of the larger efforts is central to our San Diego Unit collaborating year in and year out with our partner agencies in Mexico for border response and mitigation.

Emergency Management

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) were instrumental in creating the Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC). Since its establishment in 1996, the BAFC has been addressing wildfire challenges along the U.S./Mexico international border. The council, comprising thirty-one government agencies and organizations from both countries, including fire protection, law enforcement, legislators, emergency responders, and natural resource managers, is committed to public safety. It facilitates vital stakeholder communication and coordination through quarterly meetings and collaborative efforts.

BORDER EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS PLAN UNDER THE BORDER AGENCY FIRE COUNCIL

- The BAFC collaboration led to the establishment of the Mutual Assistance
 Plan between Mexico and the U.S., which allows emergency responders and
 resources to cross the border for fire suppression. CAL FIRE and SDCFPD play
 a crucial role in this agreement to ensure a swift and effective response to
 wildfires threatening lives and property in the border area.
- Through the BAFC, CAL FIRE and SDCFPD actively participate in quarterly
 meetings and collaborative efforts to enhance stakeholder communication and
 coordination. This includes leveraging the Mutual Assistance Plan to ensure
 swift and efficient cross-border deployment of emergency responders and
 resources for fire suppression within a mile of the international boundary.

Binational training for coordinated border response

The BAFC initiative integrates annual binational wildland fire training sessions facilitated under the Mutual Assistance Plan between Mexico and the U.S. These training sessions foster professional development and facilitate the exchange of best practices among emergency responders from both countries, ensuring a coordinated and effective response to wildfires. This joint training will occur in June 2024 with Tecate BC with OST approval.

Fuel Reduction and Home Hardening community centric initiatives

CAL FIRE and SDCFPD are implementing targeted community-centric initiatives, including fuel reduction projects, home hardening measures, and vegetation clearance along primary evacuation routes. These efforts are designed to enhance community resilience and reduce the impact of wildfires on border communities.



Seedlings germinated from the seeds that were given by the government of Mexico

Joint Environmental Ministry and Forestry Commission and CAL FIRE Resource Management seed collection partnership

The State of California and Mexico share common geographic and climatological characteristics and recognize that climate change presents challenges and risks to the environment, both countries' economies, human health, increasing extreme weather events and wildfires. and natural resources. Within California there are hundreds of thousands of acres of land that have experienced high severity wildfire where the native forests are unable to be reforested due to a lack of available seed. CAL FIRE's Reforestation Services Program partnered with Mexico's Environmental Ministry and Forestry Commission to secure 20 kilograms of high-quality Jeffrey Pine seed in fall of 2023. This opportunity not only helps to reforest our southern forestlands, but also deepens the international cooperation between CAL FIRE and the Mexican government for cross-border climateadapted forest and fire management.



Jeffrey pine cones and seeds from Mexico.



Wildlife crossing in San Diego County on Interstate 8.

Wildlife Conservation Board

The Wildlife Conservation Board continues to work in the border region funding a number of different land acquisitions and restoration projects in San Diego County. In 2023, WCB funded a wildlife crossing planning project in coordination with Caltrans to provide habitat for the federally and state endangered Peninsular Bighorn Sheep (PBS) and other species. The Project will focus on a section of I-8 located in the Peninsular Mountain ranges of eastern San Diego and Riverside and western Imperial Counties that runs through the In-Ko-Pah Gorge and bisects important habitat used as a movement corridor by endangered PBS and other wildlife. To reduce the impact I-8 has on PBS, the Project will investigate and plan for construction of at least one and up to three overcrossing structures and any necessary associated fencing and wildlife escape ramps.

U.S. EPA

The U.S. EPA Pacific Southwest Office (Region 9) continues collaboration with regional partners on the implementation of the five-year U.S.- Mexico Environmental Program, Border 2025, signed in May 2021. CalEPA is a co-chair of the California-Baja California Region, along with USEPA, Mexico's Secretariat for Environmental and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) and the State of Baja California's Secretary for Environment and Sustainable Development (SMADS). Additional information can be found in the Border 2025 Framework Document. The following is a summary of some activities accomplished in 2023.



Air Pollution Control Officer Belen Leon with Staff and County PIO Gil Rebollar at 1st Day Conference



2nd of binational Air Quality Day Fair in city of Mexicali, Baja California.

Air Quality in the California-Baja California Border Region

U.S. EPA awarded San Diego and Imperial County Air Pollution Control Districts and the California Air Resources Board \$589,000 in Clean Air Act funding to support work at the border. Some of the work included coordination of Border 2025 Task Force Meetings with partners and the public, an air quality awareness campaign in Imperial Valley, equipment to monitor hazardous air pollutants at the ports of entry near San Diego, and calibration equipment and other parts to monitoring stations in Mexicali and Tijuana. The air quality awareness campaign in Imperial Valley, called Ambientalizate, culminated with a two-day binational conference in Mexicali in November 2023. Hosted by Imperial County Air Pollution Control District, the conference brought awareness to air quality concerns in the valley, such as burning and windstorms, and brought program and community colleagues together from across the border.



APC Engineer Victor Mendez speaking with students.

Water Quality in the San Diego-Tijuana Border Region

EPA continues to work with the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), as well as counterparts in Mexico, to improve crossborder wastewater flows in the Tijuana-San Diego region through numerous water infrastructure projects on both sides of the border. Planning for the rehabilitation and expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBITWP) made advancements as the Record of Decision was signed in June for the Final Programmatic **Environmental Impact Statement, formally** completing the NEPA process and cleared the path for design. The pre-design studies were completed in August. The USIBWC issued the request for proposals for the design and construction phase in December. Additionally, Congress authorized the creation of an Interagency Agreement for EPA to transfer funding from the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to the USIBWC for the planning, design, and construction of the SBIWTP. Projects in Mexico made significant progress as well including the completed rehabilitation of the Oriente Collector.

CENTRO DE RECICLAJE INTEGRAL DE LLANTAS (CRILL) COMPREHENSIVE TIDE DECYCLING CENTER (CRILL)





BAJA MEDIO AMBIENTI

SMADS presentation on used tire management in Baja CA, Dec. 2023 Slide credit: SMADS



Composting food scraps in Mexicali, Oct. 2021 Photo credit: Compóstate Bien



Construction of Integral Waste Management Center in San Antonio Necua, Ensenada, Dec. 2022 Photo credit: INPACVI

Promote Sustainable Materials Management and Waste Management, and Clean Sites

EPA co-hosted two Goal 3 task force meetings with co-chairs representing the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Baja California Secretary of the Environment and Sustainable Development (SMADS) with topics including scrap and used tire management and prevention.

In April, seventy-seven participants attended a binational webinar focusing on the Sustainable Management of Food in the U.S.-Mexico border region. Speakers included the trinational Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) who provided information on tools for cross-border food waste prevention and recovery, and the Mexicalibased Compóstate Bien, a non-profit who presented on their residential and business food scraps collection and composting program.

In collaboration with the North American Development Bank, EPA recognized the completion of three Baja California based Border 2025-funded projects. The Instituto de Planeación Ambiental y Calidad de Vida (INPACVI) oversaw the completion of an integral waste management center in the indigenous Kumiai community of San Antonio Necua in Ensenada. The Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) completed its analysis of solid waste and environmental vulnerability in the Alamar River of Tijuana. The Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental (PFEA) culminated the extended phase of its Community Prevention of Clandestine Dumping in Anexa Miramar.

Emergency Response and Preparedness

U.S. EPA contracted and oversaw support to provide four sets of First Responder Awareness, First Responder Operations and Incident Command System Training in Mexicali, Baja California. A 40hr HazTech Refresher course was delivered in Mexicali from November 6-10, 2023. In addition to the training, a Border 2025 grant funded the assessment of binational contingency plans in the region. In 2024, San Diego-Tijuana and Mexicali-Calexico plans are scheduled to be updated utilizing findings and suggestions from the final assessment report.

Tribal, Cross-Media, and Climate

The Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) Border workgroup, composed of the 24 Tribal Nations located within the border region in Southern Arizona and California, convened and developed presentations for the EPA Region 9 quarterly Regional Tribal Operations Committee meetings. Sessions included USMCA Tijuana River Watershed Infrastructure updates and discussions on the Border 2025 Program and future Tribal collaborations.

EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) convened a Tribal Listening Session on August 1st and a Leadership Meeting on October 12th. Participation by Jane Nishida, OITA Assistant Administrator and the Regional Administrator from EPA Region 9, Martha Guzman, provided the opportunity to virtually meet with several U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes and state representatives. Discussions included Tribal inclusion in the Border 2025 Program, organization, environmental issues and Tribal and state priorities.



HazMat Tech Training, Mexicali, 11/9/2023

Environmental Health and Environmental Justice

On January 24, 2023, EPA gathered for Border 2025's first hybrid California-Baja California Regional Coordinators Meeting. This meeting included an Environmental Justice (EJ) community check-in session for EPA Region 9. The check-in provided a space for dialogue on environmental and climate justice concerns and shared the new opportunities with the Inflation Reduction Act and Environmental Justice (EJ) Program. There were over 130 non-EPA attendees, including public servants, elected officials, community organizations, various levels of government and community members.



California-Baja California Regional Coordinators Meeting and Inaugural In-Person/ Virtual (hybrid) Environmental Justice Community Check-in for the Border Region

Technical Assistance Centers

Through a joint effort, EPA and the Department of Energy established 16 Thriving **Communities Technical Assistance Centers** or TCTACs (ejtctac.org). They seek to improve federal grant processes and reduce barriers for funding through technical assistance to communities who have been historically underserved. In 2023, Region 9 staff organized launch events for the Community Energy and Environmental Justice (CCEEJ) led by San Diego State University in National City, CA and the Western Environmental Science Technical Assistance Center for Environmental Justice (West EJ Center) led by the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ. Both centers are designed to serve the entire region and are easily accessible through their websites: cceej.sdsu.edu and westejcenter.arizona.edu.

EJScreen and CalEnviroScreen Trainings

In August, EPA partnered with the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA for the first joint EJ Screen and CalEnviroScreen training. It focused on EJ tool usage for community action to respond to an identified need to facilitate grant applications. The bilingual (English/Spanish) training provided grant guides for both state and federal tools, background information, demos and held working sessions to discuss the usage of these tools for future grant development. Nearly 300 virtual participants were reached.

For the most recent documents, visit oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40 or e-mail either entity directly.

Energy

Engagement with Mexico City

Under the leadership of its Chief of Government, Claudia Sheinbaum, and her environmental secretary Marina Robles, Mexico City continued to exert leadership on climate and clean energy in Mexico. Accordingly, the CEC has focused its clean energy cooperation work in Mexico with the state of Mexico City and its environmental secretariat, Sedema. Since the initial MOU was signed in Mexico City in 2019, the CEC has engaged in a productive exchange of information, particularly related to building energy efficiency standards. In April 2023, Commissioner Andrew McAllister, his Chief of Staff Bryan Early, and CalEPA Secretary Yana Garcia traveled to Mexico City to meet with Sedema Secretary Marina Robles. After high-level meetings discussing mutual interests in pollution reduction and clean energy, the three principals signed a renewed MOU. While in Mexico City, the CEC and CalEPA also participated in a summit organized by the University of California Alianza MX Initiative aimed at accelerating clean energy and environmental coordination between California and Mexico. Under the auspices of the MOU, CEC and Sedema staff have met periodically since 2019, with partners including Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory to exchange best practices and engage in technical assistance in areas of mutual cooperation including:

- building standards development and enforcement;
- development of incentive and revolving loan programs;
- equity and decarbonization of existing buildings; and
- indoor air quality.

The CEC is working with Sedema on a potential tour of clean energy facilities in California for summer of 2024.

Engagement with the Border Region

The CEC enjoys a productive cooperative relationship with the government of the State of Baja California. Baja California is not connected with the Mexican electricity grid—instead, it is connected to the electric grid shared by the Western United States and Canada. The CEC engages with the Baja California Energy Commission on issues such as electric system reliability, renewables development, industrial efficiency, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other topics. The CEC has been engaging with Baja California under the auspices of the MOU that created the Commission of the Californias, which also includes the State of Baja California Sur. The Baja California Energy Commission and the CEC have also been engaged in discussions on executing a separate MOU to memorialize the unique need to cooperate on cross-border issues. Commissioner McAllister and his Chief of Staff last met with the Baja California Energy Commission in-person in November 2023, at an EnerBaja clean energy event they were hosting. During the meeting, plans for an individual MOU were discussed. The CEC is also discussing hosting Baja Energy Commission Officials for a tour of clean energy infrastructure in late 2024.

The CEC has also been engaging with the border region State of Sonora. Sonora has worked with the Mexican federal government on a plan that gives the state unique leeway to pursue renewable, binational energy projects, detailed in the Sonora Plan. Sonora state officials outlined the plan to the CEC during a State of California visit to Mexico City in April of 2023, and later that year visited CEC headquarters in Sacramento. The CEC and the State of Sonora are developing an MOU that focuses on nearshoring components essential to the clean energy transition, renewable development, hydrogen and other topics.

Other engagement

The CEC continues to engage in the development of the Lighting Technology Center, a joint UC-Davis, Autonomous University of Guadalajara project that was funded by the Mexican government as a result of an efficiency funding proposal that the CEC helped design under the MOU with the Mexican federal energy agency of the previous administration. The center has the potential to unlock significant energy efficiency savings across Mexico and Latin America and is modeled after a similar center in California that was seeded by CEC research and development funds. The center continues to be an example of the possibilities of binational clean energy cooperation.

The CEC maintains interest in engaging with the Mexican federal government, where most of the authority over energy policy sits. The CEC continues to enjoy a productive relationship with the Comision Nacional Para el Eficiente del la Energia (CONUEE), a federal agency that has appliance efficiency authority, and El Centro Nacional de Control de Energia (CENACE), the Mexican electric grid operator.

Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is committed to engagement and collaboration with border state counterparts on a wide variety of agricultural issues. CDFA maintains engagement with Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) and signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2019 addressing issues related to trade, climate and plant/animal health.

In 2023, CDFA in collaboration with Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), hosted a Climate Smart Agriculture Workshop at Casa de la Universidad de California — the location of California's Trade and Service Desk in Mexico City. Established in 2019, the Trade and Service Desk is a venue to promote two-way trade and strengthen California's economic, political and cultural relationship with Mexico.

The Climate Smart Agricultural Workshop brought together researchers, government representatives and academia to focus on opportunities related to water-use efficiency, healthy soils and sustainable pest management. CDFA was joined by representatives from UC Merced and UC Davis.

CDFA continues international collaboration and engagement on climate smart agricultural policies and practices to strengthen connections between academia, government and farmers on climate resilience. Partnerships strengthen research collaboration and ag tech innovations while furthering the adoption of on-farm practices to advance sustainability and soil health.

Collaboration on Agricultural Pests and Disease Issues

CDFA's Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Division continues to work with border state counterparts in addressing plant pests of mutual concern. Collaboration includes the California-Baja California Integration Group, which includes representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agricultural commissioners' offices of Imperial and San Diego counties, and representatives from Mexico's local, state and national governments. In order to enhance pest prevention and plant health, Mexico continues to supply CDFA with biological control parasitoids (organisms to suppress pest species) for addressing an infestation of Pink Hibiscus Mealybug in Southern California. This effort allows for the continued commercial viability of several specialty crops in California.

CDFA also works closely with International Services to assist with delivery of Mexfly pupae from Guatemala through Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to the production facility in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico.



CDFA Undersecretary Christine Birdsong at the Climate Smart Agriculture Workshop at Casa de la Universidad de California (September 2023)

CDFA'S Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division continues to work with border state counterparts in addressing Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and the disease that it vectors, Huanglongbing (HLB), a devastating disease that threatens 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 focuses, in collaboration with the U.S. and Mexican border states, on animal health issues. CDFA's and Baja California's state animal health officials maintain a collaborative and close working relationship in protecting animal health along the border. This is achieved through outreach, communication and ongoing professional contacts and meetings.

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 2023, California's international border crossings processed more than 16.8 million pedestrian crossings, more than 31.1 million personal vehicles, and over 1.6 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 investment along the California-Baja California border.

The latest BMP was approved by an international delegation of transportation officials in 2021. 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 POEs and related transportation projects on both sides of the border. These represent an investment of approximately \$13.5 billion for the California-Baja California region over the next 20 years. The BMP also identified more than 30 different 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.

Binational Transportation Investment

Communities at the border are amongst the most under-served 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, are 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 2023 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). Such systems improve transportation safety and mobility and enhance productivity through the integration of advanced communications technologies into the transportation infrastructure and in vehicles. ITS encompass a broad range of wireless and wireline communications-based information and electronics technologies.

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 northbound BWTS reduces economic loss because of existing border wait times for both commercial and passenger vehicles. The fiber optic communications network portion of the project began construction in 2021 and has been ongoing throughout 2022. This connected the border region to the Caltrans TMC. In addition, temporary readers were installed to collect data on commercial outbound border wait times. Both design and construction for this northbound BWTS were ongoing throughout the entirety of 2023, and the system is set to be completed by November 2023.

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. 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 was ongoing throughout 2023.

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 installed, data was collected to monitor the effects of traffic, congestion, and

commercial vehicles in the community. A final draft report of those results was submitted in December 2023.

Otay Mesa Port of Entry

In 2023, the U.S. General Services Administration and the CBP completed the construction to modernize the Otay Mesa POE. The Otay Mesa POE is the busiest commercial port in California. It processed more than \$22.2 billion in exports and

\$38.3 billion in imports in calendar year 2023. Additionally, the Otay Mesa POE processed more than 2.8 million pedestrians and more than 5.8 million vehicles. Caltrans worked 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 one million trucks in 2023, making it the busiest CVEF in the California-Baja California region. In January 2023, Caltrans broke ground to expand an additional lane and weigh-in-motion scale system to accommodate anticipated increased volumes from the Otay Mesa POE modernization. The third lane of this facility opened to traffic in December 2023.

Otay Mesa East Port of Entry

A new 120-acre 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



Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility from Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office

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-to-30-minute average wait time using a variable tolling system that serves as both a revenue collection tool and a transportation demand management tool. 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.

In August 2022, Caltrans broke ground for the new Otay Mesa East POE for the California-Baja California region. In 2023, site preparations for the POE including mass grading, drainage, and utilities were ongoing.

Multiple roadway connectors and interchanges were substantially completed in 2022, which fill in previously missing links in the transportation network for this region. These improvements provide a physical transition to and from SR-11, the existing Otay Mesa POE, and the future Otay Mesa East POE, improving mobility and access throughout the border region. The completion of this roadway infrastructure brings us one step closer towards completing the 20-year vision for an innovative new border crossing.

In December 2023, CalSTA, Caltrans, and local leaders celebrated the completion of transportation infrastructure needed to support the future Otay Mesa East border crossing. The project includes the construction of SR-11, three freeway connectors, seven bridges, among other improvements, all of which have been built in Otay Mesa in the last four years.

In 2023, the project secured a couple hundred million dollars of additional funding to advance the Otay Mesa East POE project. The project was awarded \$130 million of Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant funds. It also received \$27.84 million of State Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) Cycle 3 funding. Local funding amounting to \$47.33 million was also added to the project in 2023.

State Route 905 Landscaping Project

The landscaping improvements project for State Route 905 (SR-905) began construction in September 2022, with the plant establishment period beginning in August 2023. The project intends to fulfill and complete the environmental mitigation stated in the environmental document for SR-905 and address the lack of highway planting and beautification of this key gateway to California.



SR-905 Landscaping from Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office

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; and add new concrete barriers and minor modifications to existing landscaping, drainage, signage, and lighting. Construction for this project was ongoing throughout 2023, and the application for the presidential permit required to expand and operate this POE was approved in July 2023. In November 2023, representatives from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) joined those from the Imperial County Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and other regional partners for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Calexico East POE to celebrate the completion of the first stage of the port's new, expanded bridge infrastructure.

Calexico East Land Port of Entry Joint Operations System Feasibility Study

The study will explore a joint operation system for the Calexico East POE, which will also debut the first land POE appointment system for commercial vehicles and potentially passenger vehicles. Using current border conditions, the system will allow commercial vehicle border users to pay for a designated appointment window to cross the border. The study proposes to relay border conditions such as wait times and incident information to border crossers through a mobile application. In doing so, the traveling public would easily have access to traffic conditions and could plan their trips accordingly.

Calexico West Land Port of Entry Modernization and Expansion Project

The \$418 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 1.2 million people. In 2021, the GSA received funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to complete the project for the final construction of a new pedestrian processing building. The project which is estimated to cost between \$85-105 million will include the expansion of northbound pedestrian inspection lanes, the demolition of legacy facilities and significant earthwork. The anticipated completion date for this phase of the project is Winter 2028.

Truck Parking and Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Station Site Assessment

Parking shortages combined with regulations can force truck operators to either stop at an unsafe location or park sooner than required. This can lead to shipping inefficiencies, delays, and safety concerns. In addition, medium/heavy duty vehicles are responsible for a disproportionate share of on-road fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and health-threating pollutants. To mitigate harmful diesel emissions, accelerated efforts must be made to shift away from diesel-powered vehicles to cleaner, zero emissions vehicle alternatives. The study will identify potential sites, assess site feasibility, and develop conceptual plans for four future truck parking facilities and medium/heavy duty zero emission vehicle charging and fueling stations in San Diego and Imperial counties. The study will focus on critical freight corridors.

San Diego – Imperial County Desert Line Feasibility Study

International commerce between Mexico and California relies heavily on commercial truck traffic resulting in a single mode freight system that is unsustainable, inefficient and with significant environmental impacts. The Desert Line would reduce truck traffic at ports of entry and reduce environmental and economic impacts due to commercial vehicles idling at the border. It would fill the gap that is impeded by the current limitations on the San Diego mainline. A proposed study would determine the feasibility of reinstating freight train services on the San Diego and Arizona Eastern "Desert Line" Railroad. The Desert Line is 150 miles of short-line railroad via Baja California, Mexico and through eastern San Diego County into Imperial County. The application for a \$440,000 State Planning and Research grant to conduct this study was approved in 2023.

Clean California Projects

The Clean California Program has provided opportunities to enhance and beautify border gateways. Monuments to welcome the traveling public to California were selected to be installed in San Diego and Imperial counties. Construction for the

\$2 million Calexico (Imperial County) project was completed in June 2023 and an unveiling ceremony to commemorate the gateway monument was held in July 2023. Construction for the \$2.9 million San Ysidro (San Diego County) project began in June 2023 with an anticipated completion date of June 2024.

Health

In 2023, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continued promoting health equity by communicating and collaborating with local, state and federal partners in the CA-Baja California border region and throughout California.

California Department of Public Health, 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. Their mission is to facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration between California and Mexico health officials, health professionals, and communities 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 meetings/forums and epidemiology partnerships on public health issues of mutual interest with Mexico. For more information about OBBH, their website is: CDPH-Office of Binational Border Health.

2022 Border Health Status Report to the Legislature

In 2023, the 2022 Border Health Status Report to the Legislature (BHSR) was released to highlight the unique public health challenges and issues faced by the U.S.-Mexico border population, molded by border region experiences. Using the Healthy Border 2020 and Healthy People 2030 initiatives as guidance to identify health indicators, the topics of interest highlighted in this report are: demographic information and health indicators for obesity, diabetes, suicide, tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, select vaccine-preventable diseases, and COVID-19 in California's southern border region (i.e., San Diego and Imperial Counties). Data collected on these selected diseases and conditions is presented in the report as a comparison between the southern border and California. Ultimately, the report sheds light on the rather significant geographic and ethnic disparities that exist for each of the health indicators covered in this report. The 2022 BHSR is available to the public in the CDPH OBBH website: Office of Binational Border Health Publications.

Binational Antimicrobial Resistance Symposium

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing public health concern as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has estimated there have been almost 3 million antimicrobial resistant infections and more than 35,000 deaths in the United States each year. Mexico has experienced and voiced similar concerns. OBBH, in collaboration with CDPH-Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI), organized a Binational Antimicrobial Resistance Symposium to foster international relationships to enhance situational awareness about antimicrobial resistance and encourage cross-border response. The symposium was held on July 27, 2023, in Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico. More than 300 participants attended the event with participants from both California and Baja California, including the Laboratories Division at the California Department of Public Health, Tijuana Health Jurisdiction affiliated physicians, Tijuana Health Jurisdiction, among many others. The symposium provided a platform to exchange information on issues related to AMR surveillance, control, and the use of antimicrobial stewardship programs for healthcare associated infections prevention. The goal was to engage experts from the CDPH – Office of Binational Border Health, CDPH – Health Acquired Infections and Baja California Secretariat of Health in building a strong coalition for an antimicrobial resistance surveillance program. Following the symposium, the Baja California Secretariat of Health, California's Health Care Associated Infections Unit, and OBBH-BIDS program plan to meet on a quarterly basis to share updates, create a binational platform to share information and AMR cases, and plan future joint projects to reinforce binational coalition.

2023 Binational Health Week

Binational Health Week is a mobilization of binational collaborative efforts between the U.S. and Mexico federal and state agencies, community organizations and thousands of volunteers, to carry out health promotion activities with the objective of improving health and the wellbeing of the migrant population in the month of October. The 2023 edition theme, "Health Without Stigma, Bonding Hearts" focused its activities on chronic diseases, communicable diseases, mental health and addictions, women's health, and access to health



Second from the left: San Diego County Supervisor Nora Vargas, CDPH Director, Dr.Tomás Aragón, USHHS Secretary Xavier Beccera and Mexico Health, Secretary Dr.Jorge Alcocer holding up a plaque.

care for the migrant population living and working in the U.S. As part of the ceremony, Xavier Becerra, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Dr. Jorge Alcocer Varela, Mexican Health Secretary, provided welcoming remarks and highlighted the importance of continuing binational collaborations.

Border Infectious Disease Surveillance COVID-19 Mobile Vaccination (BIDS Vax)

BIDS Vax is a project that seeks to recruit and partner with community-based organizations to provide COVID-19 vaccine turnkey units, resources, and services, with a goal to increase vaccination among binational populations, seasonal or migrant agricultural workers, and cross border mobile populations in the border region. BIDS Vax held 12 events in 2023 to address vaccination myths, provide the public with information on where to get vaccinated, and promote vaccination among adults and children.

Cross Border Xpress (CBX) COVID-19 Testing Site

OBBH partnered with CDPH Testing Taskforce, the U.S.-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership (BPP), Mexican Consulate Ventanilla de Salud (VDS) in San Diego, and Cross Border Xpress (CBX) to establish a COVID-19 testing site at the CBX service terminal. The CBX service terminal was selected as a COVID-19 testing site because it is a highly transited direct connection used by nationals from the United States as an effective way to travel to and from the Tijuana International Airport. Community Health Workers/Promotores were hired to offer travelers entering CA with COVID-19 tests, educational materials, and resources in both English and Spanish.

San Diego & Imperial Counties Border Health Collaborative (Collaborative)

The San Diego & Imperial Counties Border Health Collaborative (Collaborative) is a project between CDPH-OBBH, County of San Diego, and the Imperial County Public Health Department that aims to bring together individuals representing government, healthcare, academia, and non-profit organizations to collaborate. The mission of the Collaborative is to enhance communication, collaboration, and coordination among public, private, and academic institutions to protect and improve the health of individuals, families and communities north of the California-Baja California border in San Diego and Imperial Counties. Regular meetings are scheduled every other month with speakers on priority health topics in the CA-Baja CA border region.

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 2022, two 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.

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

California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity

The Office of Health Equity (OHE) was established, as authorized by Section 131019.5 of the California Health and Safety Code (PDF). The OHE provides a key leadership role to reduce health and mental health disparities experienced by vulnerable communities in California.

A priority of this groundbreaking office is building of cross-sectoral partnerships. The work of OHE is informed in part, by their advisory committee and stakeholder meetings. The office works with community-based organizations and local governmental agencies to ensure that community perspectives and input help to shape a health equity lens in policies and strategic plans, recommendations, and implementation activities.

OHE Project Highlights

GUIDANCE ON WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE NEEDS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Since 2023 the CDPH Advancing Community Equity Branch's Community Inclusion and Partnerships Section has been partnering with San Diego State University to create a statewide guidance document on the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) needs of People Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) across California. This document will include recommendations for state and local agencies on how to best allocate resources to create and/or maintain sanitation infrastructure for PEH. The content of this guidance will be based on existing data and interviews/ focus groups with people with current or prior experiences of sheltered and/or unsheltered homelessness; homelessness service providers; and others with key knowledge of WaSH infrastructure. This project will end in June 2024.

PALA BAND'S TRIBAL CLIMATE HEALTH PROJECT

In 2023 the Climate Change Local Assistance Unit (CCLAU) of the CDPH Climate Change and Health Equity Branch contracted with the Pala Band of Mission Indians in San Diego County to coordinate Native American Tribal capacity building efforts and produce a number of related resources. Pala Band's Tribal Climate Health Project prepared resources for state agencies and Tribes working on preparing for and addressing the health impacts of climate change. Pala Band staff prepared an outreach contact list for California Tribal Government staff working on climate and health topics. Pala Band staff also updated the Tribal Climate Health Project Clearinghouse Website and Blog, provided cultural education to CDPH staff, co-hosted a webinar about State climate grant programs, and advised CCLAU's strategic planning around providing services to Tribes. For more information about technical assistance with climate and health-related planning and projects that CCHE provides to Tribes and local health jurisdictions in California, including the border region, visit the CCLAU webpage.

Safety

Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) Program

In 2023, Imperial County, San Diego County, and Riverside County were awarded OPSG grant funds in efforts to secure the United States' borders along routes of ingress from international borders to include travel corridors in states bordering Mexico and Canada, as well as states and territories with international water borders.

Due to its strategic location, Imperial County has historically been a significant corridor for traffickers. In Imperial County, managed by the Imperial County Sheriff's Office with oversight from the El Centro Sector (ELC), 14 participating agencies target Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) involved in various illicit activities (Appendix 1.1). The collaborative effort between ELC and Imperial Valley OPSG partners aims to disrupt TCO operations by targeting their reliance on motor vehicles and travel corridors for smuggling.

Similarly, the OPSG for the San Diego Sector, administered by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, involves 24 participating agencies (Appendix 1.2). This grant supports enforcement efforts along the maritime border, covering approximately 489 miles of coastline. San Diego's proximity to Tijuana, dense population, extensive coastline, and transportation networks heighten its risks as a target for trafficking organizations. The maritime smuggling threat is increasing, demanding involvement from state and local law enforcement to combat border-related crime, including drug and human trafficking, as well as safeguard domestic security.

OPSG Accomplishments:

In 2023, the Imperial County Sheriff's Department (ICSO) and allied forces conducted multiple highway enforcement operations in the ELC area of responsibility, resulting in significant seizures, including approximately \$477,955 in cash, 827 lbs. of methamphetamines, 22 lbs. of heroin, 377 lbs. of fentanyl, and the confiscation of 9 firearms (Appendix D3).

Additionally, agencies participating in the San Diego Sector OPSG program achieved notable outcomes. They logged 87,913 overtime hours, conducted 15,896 vehicle stops, issued 1,400 citations, made 984 arrests, and seized substantial quantities of narcotics, including marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin, and fentanyl. Furthermore, \$848,137 in currency and 70 firearms were seized (Appendix D4).

Northbound checkpoints on Interstates 5 and 15, typically closed, were exploited by TCOs to transport narcotics through California, prompting intensified efforts by the Border Crime Suppression Team (BCST). This task force, composed of Border

Patrol Agents and Sector Intelligence Units, conducted 482 traffic stops, resulting in 61 arrests, 66 narcotics cases, 10 firearms seizures, and the confiscation of \$632,470 in currency.

An exemplary display of interagency cooperation was Operation Gridlock, executed on October 23rd and 24th and November 1st and 2nd, 2023. The operation aimed to gather intelligence, disrupt, dismantle, and ultimately terminate the criminal activity associated with drug trafficking and transnational criminal organizations using Southern California interstate and highway corridors. Operation Gridlock was a multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction, narcotics, currency, and weapons interdiction operation. Within San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, and Monterey Counties, agencies simultaneously targeted Interstate 5, Interstate 8, Interstate 15, and adjacent state routes. Operation Gridlock yielded significant results, including 589 vehicle stops, 70 citations, 37 arrests, and seizures of various narcotics (Appendix D5).

California Maritime Security Program

The California Maritime Security Program is responsible for maritime safety and security awareness across the state, with units stationed in Sacramento, Northern, and Southern California. These units focus on maritime recovery, security, and intelligence and work closely with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the United States Navy. They are integrated into USCG sector staff and collaborate with the State Threat Assessment Center (STAC) and local fusion centers. They are part of the USCG Command Staff at District 11 and USCG Headquarters in Alameda, California. The program's collaboration extends to marine training, meetings, and occasional operations with Mexico's Marina, where Cal OES serves as experts and observers, sharing best practices and lessons learned with Mexican counterparts.

Efforts are ongoing between the USCG, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), Cal OES, and the Mexican Government for oil spill response. When a spill occurs, a Unified Command is established, led by the USCG and including representatives from various stakeholders. Cal OES Maritime plays a coordinating role for the liaison unit, appoints the Local Government On Scene Coordinator (LGOSC), and leads the Marine Transportation Systems Recovery Unit (MTSRU) within the Unified Command. Advanced technologies are employed for mapping and modeling during oil spills, extending across the border with Mexico.

In 2023, California and Mexico joint responses were required for small spills or sheens. Climate and environmental preservation remain key priorities for both California and Mexico, leading to continued collaboration in oil spill response drills and other maritime activities. Coordination between Mexico and the United States also extends to vessel traffic scheduling and status monitoring, particularly for ships delivering critical payloads to California's Agricultural Industry. This coordination involves monitoring ships' movements and ensuring compliance with depth requirements for California's inland ports.

Emergency Management

Cal OES/México Response

In August 2023, Tropical Storm Hilary struck Mexico's Pacific Coast, Baja California Peninsula, and the Southwestern US, triggering flooding and mudslides. Cal OES activated the State Operations Center and coordinated closely with authorities in the Mexican states of Baja California and Baja California Sur, facilitating communication between the nations and sharing storm updates with the Mexican consulates in California.

On October 25, 2023, Hurricane Otis struck near Acapulco, Mexico, as a Category 5 hurricane. In response to the Governor's request, Cal OES partnered with local authorities and an international non-governmental organization to deliver a 50-bed field hospital and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) to the affected region.

Cal OES continues to monitor and collaborate with the International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC) on reporting raw sewage spills discharging into the Tijuana River, which has the potential to arrive at the International Boundary or any other location along the international border. In 2023, the California State Warning Center received 20 spill incident notifications from the IBWC and followed notification protocols by notifying all U.S. stakeholders.

Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG)

Cal OES continues to maintain active engagement with representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, US Customs and Border Protection, as well as stakeholders from Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. This collaborative effort is dedicated to establishing and sustaining operable and interoperable public safety communications along the US and Mexico border. In 2023, the SWBCWG identified strategic priorities for 2024 (Appendix D6).

9-1-1 Emergency Communications Branch, Public Safety Communications Point with Mexico

Cal OES continues to work with the 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) along the Mexico border to improve 911 call routing and transfers between California and Mexico.

In August 2023, Cal OES participated in a Cross Border 911 Collaboration meeting in Mexico City, organized by the US Department of State. Leaders from the ten US and Mexican border states convened to address communication challenges in the border region.

Since that meeting, Cal OES secured confirmation from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that routing California 911 calls directly to a PSAP in Mexico complies with FCC regulations. Cal OES is actively collaborating with 911 service providers and wireless carriers to implement location-based routing directly to Mexican PSAPs. Furthermore, any 911 call received by the California Next Generation 911 system destined for Mexico will be directed to the appropriate PSAP there, aiming to reduce manual transfers.

Listos California

Housed in the Cal OES Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Listos California aims to increase community preparedness by partnering with local trusted messengers with strong ties to communities throughout the state. Through these relationships, the program delivers culturally appropriate disaster preparedness resources and training, available in over 20 languages, to communities that often lack access to this vital information. This peer-to-peer approach to community engagement helps to prioritize equity in protecting socially marginalized populations.

In 2023, \$19 million in Listos California Grant funding was awarded to 91 trusted messengers, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), federally recognized Tribal Nations in California, and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). Their efforts resulted in over 8,500 community engagements and reaching more than 3 million individuals belonging to one or more target populations which include, but are not limited to, seniors and older adults, farmworkers, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, individuals and families experiencing homelessness, geographically isolated individuals, and households with limited English proficiency. The materials found on ListosCalifornia.org in the resource hub provide culturally competent, accessible, in-language information to advance a new, more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture of disaster preparedness.

Unified Border Coordination Group (UBCG)

In March 2021, the State of California established the UBCG and in September of 2023, the mission ended, and the Incident Management Team (IMT) was dissolved. Comprised of Cal OES, California Department of Social Services, California Health and Human Services, Emergency Medical Service Authority, and California Department of Public Health, the IMT provided humanitarian aid to asylum-seeking migrants entering California via the Mexico border. This support extended to San Diego, Imperial, and Riverside counties, involving collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, along with four NGOs. Currently, asylum-seeking migrants are assisted by local non-profits, and supported with technical assistance by the California Department of Social Services.

Appendix A

Figure 1. Trade Statistics with Mexico²

(Billions of U.S. dollars)	2022	2023	% Change
U.S. Exports to Mexico	324.31	323.23	- 0.33%
CA Exports to Mexico	30.78	33.27	8.1%
U.S. Imports from Mexico	454.77	475.61	4.6%
CA Imports from Mexico	60.48	61.51	1.7%
U.S. Total Trade with Mexico	779.08	798.83	2.5%
CA Total Trade with Mexico	91.25	94.78	3.87%

² USA Trade Online – U.S. Census Bureau. State Exports by North American Industry Classification System.

Appendix B: Additional Air Quality Efforts

Controlling Mobile Source Emissions

CARB kicked off an ACF Regulation Implementation Group (TRIG) meeting process comprised of various stakeholders to discuss how to implement the ACF regulation most effectively. There are four separate groups for these meetings: Rule Provisions, Infrastructure, Outreach, and Border Communities. The Border TRIG seeks constructive conversations on challenges and solutions to successfully implement the ACF and is composed of representatives from a diverse range of entities in the private and public sectors, as well as from the manufacturing industry in Baja, CA.

CARB staff has participated in several events at locations around the border to discuss the ACF regulation, incentives, infrastructure, and technical assistance. The events have been organized with stakeholders such as the Cámara Nacional del Autotransporte de Carga (CANACAR) and Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce and are advertised on both sides of the border. CARB also participated in a Ride and Drive event held in Otay Mesa in August and a binational workshop help in conjunction with CalEPA and Baja California's Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable (Environment and Sustainable Development Agency) in November.

Under CARB's Clean Mobility Options Voucher Program (CMO), four projects were launched in the border region, including transportation needs assessments grants to the City of Escondido for \$100,000, and to the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians for \$99,960. More information can be found on the CMO webpage.

Air Quality Research and Planning

CARB kicked off a new research project to improve agricultural biomass burning estimates in and around the Mexicali Valley. The purpose of the project is to develop an automated process to create annual biomass burning inventories using satellite imagery.

CARB completed a vehicle emissions inventory project, updating fleet characteristics in Mexicali and other border cities, to improve current emissions modeling accuracy in the region. Roadside remote sensing data were collected at seven sites across Baja California. The study found that vehicles operating legally in Mexico have emissions that are 1-2 times higher than California-registered vehicles. For vehicles operating illegally in Mexico (and not registered in California), emissions ranged between 2.8 - 3.5 times higher than California-registered vehicles.

CARB staff continued to analyze the Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) measured during the November 2021 mobile measurement campaign conducted in the San Ysidro community. The objective was to support an AB 617 Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) by studying the spatial variabilities of VOCs (including air toxics) like benzene, xylene, trimethylbenzene, acrylonitrile, and methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), among other health-affecting pollutants like oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and carbon monoxide (CO) at and near the locations where the community raised air pollution exposure concerns during an AB 617 Community Steering Committee (CSC) meeting. The coordination efforts included the community of San Ysidro, Casa Familiar, the SDAPCD, the San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, and the San Ysidro School District.

CARB published a report highlighting their work with UC Riverside at the Salton Sea. To better understand the health concerns of people living near Salton Sea, US EPA funding was utilized to engage researchers and local communities in this collaborative project. Through community forums, the primary goals of this project were to facilitate communication between these stakeholder groups, and to identify community concerns about Salton Sea related emissions and where to focus future research. In addition, the project aimed to improve coordination and cooperation in the region by building relationships between academic researchers working on Salton Sea-related projects, representatives of groups active in Salton Sea-area communities, local residents, and CARB.

CARB continued to work on compiling information on the air pollution research needs in the Imperial Valley. Together with San Diego State University and local community-based partners, four public meetings were held, capturing the lived experiences of communities in the area. The public meetings were held in several different locations to capture input from a wider audience. In the coming year, CARB aims to refine the results from the analysis, complete a report, and hold the final public meeting where the results will be disseminated.

CARB continued to support daily air quality forecasting for the Imperial-Mexicali border area, as well as the maintenance and operation of an air quality information and alert system for the web, mobile devices, and email subscribers. This effort is aimed at providing timely air quality information to residents throughout the Imperial-Mexicali border area.

Air Monitoring

In December of 2023, CARB provided training on low-cost air sensors to the City of Tijuana's Environmental Protection Directorate (DPA) in San Ysidro. The purpose of the training was to provide information on PurpleAir Sensors to DPA including procedures on installation, configurations, troubleshooting, and how to register the sensors. This training is part of CARB's broader efforts with binational partners at the California-Mexico border to improve air quality and provide low-cost sensors to the most impacted communities. The training was conducted under CARB's MOU with the City of Tijuana signed in 2022.

CARB also provided an air monitoring training session at the offices of Imperial County APCD in December. Participants included representatives from SMADS of Baja California and the Direccion de Proteccion al Ambiente of the City of Mexicali. The purpose of the training was to provide participants with hands-on instruction on calibrating gaseous analyzers and PM monitors, as well as guidance on maintenance procedures. This training is part of CARB's broader efforts to enhance air monitoring station performance and ensure accurate data collection. The training was held, in part, as the result of an audit of the Baja California air monitoring network previously carried out by Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Ecología y Cambio Climático (INECC) with support from CARB.

Community Engagement, Investments and Grants

California Climate Investments funded outreach efforts in the border region through the Low Carbon Transportation Program, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, and others, reached about 7,770 participants across more than 200 events.

CARB released a joint solicitation for clean transportation and planning funding under three programs: Planning and Capacity Building, Clean Mobility in Schools, and the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project. These programs are intended to increase residents' access to key destinations without the use of personal vehicles. Local governments and community-based organizations from San Diego County submitted five concept applications requesting a total of \$28.2 million. Two applicants were invited to submit full applications, which focused on active transportation infrastructure, youth transit subsidies, and microtransit.

Through the Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2021 (REAP 2.0), a new funding program administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the Strategic Growth Council, and CARB, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) were awarded \$10 million along the Trolley Blue Line (running from San Ysidro to University Town Center) for Transforming and Advancing South County Transit Communities. This includes infrastructure investments to support a 483-unit transit-oriented affordable and middle-income housing project and other community serving uses and capital improvements to convert an automobile alleyway into a multimodal corridor linked to the trolley station.

Additionally, SANDAG was awarded \$38.73 million in non-competitive funding which will be split between affordable housing development, the establishment of an affordable housing trust fund, and three separate suballocation programs: one to local jurisdictions for planning and capital investment; one to transportation agencies for studies and predevelopment work to create mobility hubs; and one to tribal entities for predevelopment plans, studies, and outreach materials for housing proposals.

United for Justice (UFJ) was awarded a \$100,000 CARB Community Air Grant to monitor air quality and educate and empower residents in communities in the Salton Sea Basin. The Salton Sea Basin Monitoring Network will deploy two air monitors at the East Shores of the Salton Sea Shoreline communities and one at the West Shores of the Salton Sea Shoreline community. The UFJ Project will monitor criteria pollutants and gases, temperature, relative humidity, and barometric pressure. Additionally, UFJ will hold community events in the East and West Shores of the Salton Sea Shoreline communities for education and outreach purposes throughout the course of the Project.

Enforcement

In 2023, as in previous years, CARB's **Enforcement Division conducted** inspections on heavy-duty vehicles in the border region, for compliance with California emissions regulations. Many of these inspections included the use of CARB's remote sensing device known as Portable Emissions AcQuisition System (PEAQS), which is used to screen the emissions of passing heavy duty traffic in order to identify the highest emitting vehicles. In collaboration with California Highway Patrol, the high emitting vehicles are then selected for a full inspection of the emission control systems. PEAQS was deployed at



CARB Enforcement Division staff inspect a heavy-duty vehicle for emissions compliance. Permission granted by CARB Enforcement Division.

three locations in the border region where commercial truck traffic enters California - Otay Mesa, Calexico, and Winterhaven - and resulted in over 100 heavy duty vehicles inspected and 64 citations issued.

Appendix C: Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Colorado River Basin Water Board collaborated with U.S. EPA, the IBWC, and Mexico to address New River pollution originating from Mexicali through bimonthly Binational Technical Committee (BTC) meetings. Representatives of the US EPA, North American Development Bank, US International Boundary and Water Commission, Comisión International de Limites del Agua, Comisión Estatal del Agua, Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Mexicali, Comisión Nacional del Agua, and the Imperial County Public Health Department participated in the BTC.

BTC meetings were previously held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and transitioned to in-person participation in July 2023. Site inspections of main wastewater treatment and pumping facilities resumed with in-person meetings. Topics of discussion included the state of sewage infrastructure in Mexicali, progress to address deficiencies, and measures to prevent adverse water quality impacts to the New River. Discharges into the New River and the notification protocol for bypasses were also discussed.

Raw sewage discharge into the New River occurred in Mexicali, Baja California in January, March, and July through December. On January 31, 2023, the Colorado River Basin Water Board was informed of a bypass into the New River of approximately 6,075 cubic meters (m3) resulting from a rain event. An additional 10,880 m3 of wastewater was discharged into the New River in a planned shutoff at Pumping Plant #2 for rehabilitation work on March 31, 2023. On July 31, 2023, heavy rains resulted in the bypass of approximately 14,400 m3 to prevent damage to several pumping plants. Similarly, Hurricane Hilary produced heavy rains resulting in a discharge into the New River of approximately 56,020 m3 due to high water flows at pumping plants in August. On September 1, 2023, a volume of 37,400 m³ was discharged to the New River as a result of heavy rains. On October 30, 2023, a rupture at the Aurora force main was reported and led to a 1,119 m³ discharge. Additionally, a cumulative discharge of 23,380 m³ was released into the New River during November to execute replacement work and repairs. On December 22, 2023, an estimated volume of 6,300 m3 was discharged into the New River resulting from a rain event.

In addition to BTC meetings, Colorado River Basin Water Board staff also attended the California – Mexico Border Relations Council Meeting virtually in October 2023.

Moreover, the Colorado River Basin Water Board also implemented its regulatory programs to address New River pollution. The Colorado River Basin Water Board regulates and monitors discharges into the New River by controlling pollution from:

- Nonpoint sources, mainly agriculture, by implementing total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) 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 water quality monitoring.

The Colorado River Basin Water Board renewed one National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for the Date Gardens Mobile Home Park Wastewater Treatment Plant which discharges to the New River in the border area.

Water quality monitoring consists of monthly sampling events at the International Boundary in Calexico to study and record water quality changes. Key constituents include pathogens, ammonia as nitrogen, total Kjeldahl nitrogen, total phosphorous, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), arsenic, and selenium. Sampling results are available. Data is used to determine the extent of New River pollution, effects of the infrastructure projects in Mexicali, Baja California, and conformance with water quality standards and treaty agreements.

The New River Improvement Project

The New River Improvement Project is designed to divert New River flow from Mexico into a bypass encasement near the border in efforts to minimize human contact with the severely polluted river water in the Calexico community. A pump-back system is anticipated to pump back secondary treated wastewater into the existing riverbed to replenish the flow and create wetlands in the community. The project requires several Water Board permits including a 401 Water Quality Certification, construction dewatering waste discharge requirements, a general stormwater construction, and a modification to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for the City of Calexico's Wastewater Treatment Plant to change the location of the discharge.



Staff in protective equipment taking water quality samples for the New River Improvement Project. April 2023.

In 2023, the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Board issued a Notice of Applicability for enrollment under the Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters General Order R7-2015-0006 for the New River Improvement Project. The Notice of Applicability was issued for discharges of wastewater from dewatering activities due to the installation of the trash screen and diversion structure, the pump-back system's pump station, and the 72-inch bypass pipe for the New River Improvement Project Calexico Reach.



Photo from 1991 with two staff taking water quality samples on a small dock on the New River.

The Regional Board has monitored the water quality of the New River since 1975.

Appendix D: Operation Stonegarden Program

Appendix D1 Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) Program participants from Imperial County:

- Imperial County Sheriff's Office
- California Highway Patrol El Centro
- California Highway Patrol Calexico
- California Highway Patrol Winterhaven
- El Centro Police Department
- Brawley Police Department
- Calexico Police Department
- Imperial Police Department
- Calipatria Police Department
- Imperial County Probation Department
- Imperial County District Attorney's Office Investigations
- Imperial County Narcotics Task Force
- Riverside County Sheriff's Department
- San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

Appendix D2 OPSG Program participants from San Diego County:

- Chula Vista Police Department
- El Cajon Police Department
- Escondido Police Department
- La Mesa Police Department
- Oceanside Police Department
- San Diego Harbor Police Department
- Sycuan Tribal Police Department
- University of California Police Department
- Huntington Beach Police Department
- Laguna Beach Police Department
- Newport Beach Police Department
- Seal Beach Police Department
- San Diego Sheriff's Department
- Orange County Sheriff's Department
- Riverside County Sheriff's Department
- Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
- Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department
- Ventura County Sheriff's Department
- San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department
- Monterey County Sheriff's Department
- San Mateo County Sheriff's Department
- California Highway Patrol
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Parks and Recreation

Appendix D3 2023 El Centro Sector OPSG Statistics

Category	Results
Mileage	163,168
Vehicle Stops	8,175
Citations	4,441
Arrests	143
Prosecution Cases	53
Narcotic Cases	48
Cocaine (kg)	4.00
Methamphetamines (kg)	375.33
Heroin (kg)	10.00
Fentanyl (kg)	153.00
Other Narcotics (kg)	59.00
Currency Seized	\$477,955.00
Firearms Seized	9

Appendix D4 2023 San Diego Sector OPSG Statistics

Category	Results
Overtime hours	87,913
Vehicle Stops	15,896
Citations	1,400
Arrests	984
Narcotic Cases	327
Marijuana (kg)	38.08
Cocaine (kg)	244.84
Methamphetamines (kg)	1,308.82
Heroin (kg)	46.10
Fentanyl (kg)	397.59
Currency Seized	\$848,137
Firearms Seized	70

Appendix D5 2023 Operation Gridlock Statistics

Category	Results
Vehicle Stops	589
Citations	70
Arrests	37
Marijuana (kg)	905
Cocaine (kg)	29.98
Methamphetamines (kg)	148.3
Heroin (kg)	32.7
M30	19 (pills)
Firearms Seized	2

Appendix D6 - Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG) Strategic Priorities for 2024

Strategic Priority 1:

Support the governance, technical, and policy solutions that improve federal/state/local operability and interoperability in the region.

• Strategic Priority 2:

Support risk mitigation to public safety communications systems in the region (e.g., cybersecurity awareness, encryption).

Strategic Priority 3:

Provide in-person forums for the Southwest Border (SWB) Statewide Interoperability Coordinator's (SWIC) to share and engage with region-specific counterparts/operators/subject matter experts to problem solve.

• Strategic Priority 4:

Facilitate policy and planning efforts for interoperable systems by coordinating with partners across all levels of government and providing subject matter expertise for interoperable systems governance, planning, and operations.

• Strategic Priority 5:

Establish and maintain active tribal relationships along the SWB.

• Strategic Priority 6:

Explore resolutions to all cross-border interference.

Strategic Priority 7:

Support and help coordinate solutions to border specific 911 call misrouting issues (Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) / Emergency Communications Center (ECC) routing, PSAP-to-PSAP communications).

• Strategic Priority 8:

Raise awareness of cross-border engagement efforts with the Government of Mexico to address interoperability and frequency jamming challenges along/across the border.

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