

2024
Annual Report

2024 California Mexico Border Relations Council Annual Report

A Summary of Activities Undertaken in 2024



Published in March 2026





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.

Contents

Welcome	1
Council Background	4
Council Members	6
Executive Summary	7
Trade	10
Business, Consumer Services, and Housing	12
Environment	15
Natural Resources	28
U.S. EPA	31
Energy	38
Transportation	40
Health	50
Safety	54
Emergency Management	57
Appendix A: Trade Statistics with Mexico	59
Appendix B: Additional Air Quality Efforts	60
Appendix C: Safety and Emergency Management Efforts	67

Welcome

Dear Members of the Legislature:

On behalf of the California-Mexico Border Relations Council (Council), I am pleased to submit our 2024 Annual Report. This report summarizes the significant activities and strategic approach undertaken by our member state agencies to address the diverse and complex issues facing the California-Mexico border region. This includes the Council's work and state investments on a wide range of issues spanning the environment, natural resources, transportation, public health, agriculture, emergency services, housing, and economic development.

The enclosed 2024 Annual Report details the Council's accomplishments across these key sectors and showcases the deep partnerships at the local, state, federal, and binational levels. This report highlights the interconnectedness of our region and underscores the state's commitment to fostering a safe, healthy, and prosperous border community.

Key highlights from 2024 include:

Strengthening Economic and Trade Relations

- Mexico continues to be California's primary export destination, with California businesses exporting over \$33.5 billion in goods in 2024. Total bilateral trade between California and Mexico reached nearly \$98 billion. The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) led multiple trade missions focused on key sectors like aerospace, automotive, green building, and sustainable manufacturing to promote two-way trade and investment. Furthermore, Mexico is California's 13th-largest source of foreign investment, with 549 Mexican-owned companies supporting 13,872 California jobs and generating \$1.58 billion in annual wages.

Addressing Transboundary Environmental Challenges

- Significant strides were made to address longstanding environmental issues, particularly pollution in transboundary waterways.
- Water Quality: Collaborative projects funded by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), were successfully completed. The Rural Community Assistance Center installed a trash boom in the main channel of the Tijuana River, collecting over 456 tons of trash during storm events in early 2024. The New River Improvement Project successfully installed a trash diversion screen to remove solid waste from the river. Additionally, the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) reached a major milestone by regaining compliance with secondary treatment standards in November 2024 after significant rehabilitation efforts. Work also began on a project to double the plant's treatment capacity, up to 35 million gallons.

- **Waste Tire Management:** Through grant funding and clean up efforts, in 2024, CalRecycle and its partners removed 23,866 illegally dumped tires from the California-Mexico Border Region.
- **Air Quality:** The California Air Resources Board (CARB) provided technical support in response to the air pollution crisis in the Tijuana River Valley. This support included hydrogen sulfide monitoring equipment, to the San Diego Air Pollution Control District, and facilitation of \$2.7 million in funding for the district's successful residential air filtration program.

Modernizing Transportation Infrastructure and Enhancing Mobility

- In 2024, California's border crossings processed over 16.3 million pedestrians, 31.3 million personal vehicles, and 1.6 million commercial trucks. Caltrans District 11 is leading numerous projects to address the resulting congestion and environmental impacts.
- Significant progress was made on the State Route 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry, a new state-of-the-art facility that will use dynamic tolling to manage demand and reduce wait times. Modernization and expansion of the Calexico West Land Port of Entry also continued, with the Design-Build contract for the final phase awarded in July 2024.

Technology and Sustainability

- To alleviate congestion, Caltrans is developing a Border Wait Time System (BWTS) and a mobile app to provide travelers with real-time information. Feasibility studies were completed for truck parking facilities with zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) charging stations and for reinstating service on the Desert Line freight railroad to reduce truck traffic.

Public Health

- The California Department of Public Health's Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH) facilitated critical collaborations, including a tabletop exercise with Baja California officials to simulate a response to a healthcare-associated infection (HAI) emergency and a binational symposium to improve the diagnosis and surveillance of rickettsiosis.

Safety and Security

- The Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) Program continues to be a cornerstone of binational security efforts. In 2024, agencies in the San Diego Sector OPSG program logged over 102,000 overtime hours, made 1,021 arrests, and seized significant quantities of narcotics, \$1.87 million in currency, and 112 firearms, disrupting Transnational Crime Organizations.

The activities detailed in this report reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to fulfilling its legislative mandate and enhancing the well-being of the border region through effective cross-agency and binational collaboration. We thank the Legislature for its continued support of these vital efforts.

Sincerely,

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

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

Council Background



Looking west over Tijuana River Estuary. Imperial Beach, San Diego County.

The California-Mexico border region has long been defined by deep interconnectedness and shared interdependence. 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 address 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 facilitates 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



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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. 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 (CNRA), as well as U.S. EPA, have made significant strides in the border region to improve air and water quality. As part of a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Baja California, CalEPA is developing a workplan with Baja California counterparts to reduce harmful emissions and waste tires across the border region.

Energy

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 the monitoring of sewage spills into the Tijuana River and the subsequent U.S. stakeholders notification, participating in critical discussions concerning public safety communications, and engaging local communities to enhance disaster preparedness, prioritizing equity and accessibility through Listos California.

Transportation

The 2024 Annual Report of the California-Mexico Border Relations Council provides an overview of Caltrans District 11's efforts to enhance transportation systems and foster binational cooperation at the California-Baja California border. Caltrans District 11 encompasses the border regions of San Diego and Imperial counties, where it is actively working to advance California's transportation priorities in alignment with the California-Baja California Border Master Plan. This comprehensive blueprint serves as a strategic guide for coordinating transportation investments and policy decisions between the U.S. and Mexico. It focuses on improving border infrastructure, increasing the efficiency of cross-border movements, and reducing environmental impacts. In 2024, the district made significant progress in addressing congestion, enhancing mobility, and supporting economic growth through various projects and initiatives.

In 2024, California's border crossings processed over 16.3 million pedestrians, more than 31.3 million personal vehicles, and over 1.6 million commercial trucks, underscoring the significant role the region plays in both national and international trade. The Calexico West Land Port of Entry (POE) and Otay Mesa POE, which are among the busiest in the United States, experienced considerable growth in vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

To alleviate the impact of congestion, Caltrans, alongside federal agencies like U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP), has been exploring innovative technological solutions. This includes the Border Wait Time System, which provides real-time information on border wait times, and the Otay Mesa East POE project, aimed at enhancing mobility through improved infrastructure and tolling systems. A mobile app for border wait times is currently under development, and a future appointment system for commercial vehicles at the Calexico East POE is in the works. Both developments aim to improve the flow of goods and travelers across the border.

The report also highlights several key initiatives and ongoing projects that reflect Caltrans District 11's commitment to sustainable development and cross-border collaboration. A major focus is reducing environmental impacts through initiatives such as the Binational Rail Strategy and the feasibility study to reinstate service to the Desert Line, which seeks to alleviate truck traffic by revitalizing freight rail services. To further address environmental and community challenges, Caltrans is working to transition from diesel-powered vehicles to zero-emission alternatives, with feasibility studies underway for truck parking facilities and ZEV charging stations. Additionally, the Clean California Program is improving the aesthetic and environmental quality of key border areas by installing welcome monuments in San Diego and Imperial counties. Through these projects and ongoing efforts, Caltrans District 11 is committed to enhancing cross-border transportation infrastructure, reducing pollution, and creating a more efficient and sustainable binational transportation system.

Safety

Efforts to ensure border safety remain 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 support 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 the monitoring of emergency incidents and the subsequent U.S. stakeholders notification, participating in critical discussions concerning public safety communications, and engaging local communities to enhance disaster preparedness, prioritizing outreach through the Listos California program.

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 \$33.5 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 imports \$64.3 billion worth of goods from Mexico, over 12% of U.S. imports from Mexico (\$505.9 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 2024, including outbound trade missions and export support for California small businesses by way of the California State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) and cross-border economic development funding. Notable events include: 1) In February 2024, GO-Biz led an aerospace and automotive trade mission to Querétaro, aiming to promote two-way trade in these sectors with a focus on climate mitigation opportunities. 2) That same month, GO-Biz supported the individual participation of companies pursuing green building and construction opportunities in Mexico and 3) took part virtually in a Sustainable Shipping Forum hosted by the UC San Diego Institute of the Americas, where discussions emphasized the importance of California–Mexico collaboration in achieving shared goals for sustainability and environmental stewardship in maritime transport. 4) In March 2024, GO-Biz, in partnership with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, UC Ag and Natural Resources, and Baja California officials, participated in the Mexicali AgTech Showcase at AgroBaja, highlighting California’s agricultural technology and identifying opportunities for university exchange and cluster partnerships to promote climate smart ag technologies. 5) In September 2024, GO-Biz showcased California companies at the Green Expo Mexico to support business networking opportunities in environmental management, water technology, and clean energy, advancing MOU commitments with CalEPA, the California Energy Commission, and Mexico City. 6) That same month, GO-Biz participated in the inauguration events of Mexico’s new president, Claudia Sheinbaum, to build relationships with the incoming administration and highlight their shared commitment to sustainable and environmentally focused cross-border economic development. 7) And lastly, in October 2024, GO-Biz participated in the Industrial Transformation Mexico tradeshow to promote sustainable manufacturing and strengthen cross-border industry collaboration.

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 to further strengthen California’s deep economic, political, and cultural ties with the Americas. It is utilized by California’s Trade and Investment Representative for the Americas to advance mutual trade and investment opportunities across the region. In addition, the desk is made available to California state officials for official use, serving as a resource to support intergovernmental collaboration and deepen the California–Mexico relationship.

Foreign Investment

In March 2024, GO-Biz attended the SelectUSA Mexico Conference in Mexico City, engaging with approximately 200 Mexican companies interested in U.S. investment and presenting cleantech opportunities in California.

Mexico is California’s 13th-largest source of foreign investment. There are 549 Mexican-owned companies supporting 13,872 California jobs, paying \$1.58 billion in annual wages. Top sectors for Mexican investment in California include wholesale trade, professional services, and mineral manufacturing. Geographically, these businesses support jobs throughout the state, notably in Los Angeles (29.4%), San Diego (24.6%), San Bernardino, Orange, and Sacramento 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 2024, California strengthened its relationship with Mexico through a combination of virtual and in-person engagements across multiple levels. Diplomatic efforts centered on key priorities such as advancing the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry, supporting the U.S.-Mexico water ferry project to enhance cross-border movement and tourism while easing border congestion, and maintaining ongoing consultations with Baja California government officials. California also fostered cross-agency collaboration through the Commission of the Californias (ComCal), focusing on strategic sectors including infrastructure, manufacturing, and tourism. Building on the momentum from the 2023 California-Mexico 2030 Forum organized by UC Alianza, discussions continued around climate economy transitions and expanding academic engagement to further support U.S.-Mexico relations. Additionally, GO-Biz remained actively engaged with the Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC), a federal-state partnership established under the 2008 Farm Bill to combat poverty by promoting 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) continues to support border communities by funding efforts to preserve and expand housing, protecting consumers, and safeguarding civil rights. Departments within BCSH also work with counterparts across the border to improve licensing and consumer services, partner with the community to uphold civil rights, and invest in border regions to provide safe, stable housing.

Providing Safe and Stable Homes

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) helps to provide stable, safe homes that are affordable to the people of California. In 2024, HCD invested over \$226 million in Imperial and San Diego counties across various programs, including the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, Permanent Local Housing Allocation Program, Infill Infrastructure Grant, and Homekey. HCD's Codes and Standards' Registration and Titling program provided in-person multi-lingual technical assistance to customers in Imperial County, helping facilitate mobile home and manufactured home registration, titling forms and processing applications.

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 now-closed Mortgage Relief Program, 694 homeowners in San Diego and Imperial counties received \$17.2 million in grants to address mortgage delinquency, unpaid property taxes and reverse mortgage fees; and to reduce or eliminate partial claims/loan deferrals. The National Mortgage Settlement counseling program also provided 2001 free housing counseling sessions for clients in San Diego and Imperial counties. CalHFA provided new financing for 386 affordable housing units in San Diego, and provided down payment and closing cost assistance totaling \$13 million to help 352 homebuyers in San Diego and Imperial counties.

Consumer Protections

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) protects California consumers' health, safety, and welfare through the licensure, regulation, and oversight of professional services. DCA comprises 36 boards and bureaus responsible for regulating over three million licenses across over 250 professions and occupations.

In 2024, DCA boards and bureaus engaged in the following collaborative initiatives with Mexico:

- The Medical Board of California (MBC) collaborated with sponsors of the Licensed Physicians from Mexico Pilot Program (LPMPP) to support AB 2860 and AB 2864, which expanded and extended this successful program. Furthermore, the Board discussed the 3rd Annual LPMPP Progress Report, compiled by the UC Davis Health Center for Reducing Health Disparities. In addition, MBC staff attended the San Benito Health Foundation's annual Bi-National Health Week event in October 2024.
- DCA collaborated with the Consulate General of Mexico to:
 - Provide resources and information from the following boards and bureaus: Medical Board of California (MBC), California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (BBC), Osteopathic Medical Board of California (OMBC), Bureau of Automotive Repair's Consumer Assistance Program. Staff disseminated information on consumer resources, such as how to file a complaint, check a license, types of licenses, and employment opportunities.
 - Participate in several outreach events focused on financial, health, and educational fairs to share consumer and licensing resources and conduct individual board/bureau workshops. Highlights include: National Financial Education Week focused on disseminating information specifically to empower seniors with consumer information in their native language, Education Week focused on disseminating information and providing presentations throughout the event on consumers' resources from the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) and its Office of Student Assistance and Relief (OSAR), and hosting "Get to Know DCA" Facebook Live events.

The Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) oversees California financial service providers, enforces laws and regulations, promotes innovation and fair and honest business practices, and enhances consumer awareness. The DFPI licenses, regulates, and oversees financial industries and professionals such as state-chartered banks and credit unions, broker-dealer and investment advisers, franchises, money transmitters, student loan servicers, and more. In 2024, the DFPI collaborated with the government of Mexico and provided services in San Diego and Imperial Counties in the follow ways:

- The CalMoneySmart program provides grants of up to \$200,000 to nonprofit organizations to provide financial education and empowerment programs for unbanked and underbanked Californians. In 2024, two nonprofits, Logan Heights Community Development Corporation and Community Financial Resources, were awarded grants to provide services and programs in San Diego and Imperial Counties.
- The Student Loan Empowerment (SLE) Project provided \$7.25 million in grants to community-based organizations and legal aid groups to provide free education, case management, and assistance with student loan issues. In 2024, nine of these organizations were awarded grants in San Diego and Imperial Counties.
- The DFPI's Targeted Outreach Team provides financial education and scam prevention presentations, workshops, and resources at events, partnering with community-based organizations, local governments, and Mexican Consulates throughout California. In 2024, these partnerships and events included participating 11 events with the Mexican Consulates of Fresno, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Francisco.

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 2024 include:

To address transboundary flows of sewage and trash, the San Diego Water Board adopted Resolution No. R9-2024-0155 to approve the Lower Tijuana River Indicator Bacteria and Trash Advance Restoration Plans (ARPs). The ARP's Implementation Plan identifies potential actions by the San Diego Water Board to control sources of indicator bacteria and trash and achieve water quality objectives in the lower Tijuana River.

CalRecycle carried out several cleanup efforts in California Border Field State Park, removing approximately 1,200 tires from the Park.

OEHHA completed a video with stories from tribal leaders about pesticide exposure and its impacts, including stories from communities at the border. This work is part of a larger toolkit being co-developed with tribal experts to support tribal health providers. These materials honor Indigenous lifeways and provide practical tools for preventing harm.

CARB provided training on low-cost PM2.5 sensors for the City of Tijuana to support the maintenance of their network of sensors around the city. Additionally, CARB continued to provide technical support and training to the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District and the City of Mexicali to support their network of low-cost PM2.5 sensors.

Air Quality

As a part of its mission to protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through the effective reduction of air pollutants, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) continued its work in the border region to improve air quality in 2024. CARB furthered this goal through core programmatic functions including the [California Climate Investments \(CCI\)](#), [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 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 continues to strengthen relationships with Mexican counterparts to improve air quality outcomes. These efforts are described in Appendix B: Additional Air Quality Efforts of this annual report. CARB's ever-expanding [California-Mexico border-specific webpage](#) is dedicated to providing information more broadly on border activities and is updated regularly.

In 2024 the evolving air pollution crisis at the Tijuana River Valley required immediate and sustained action. Addressing the underlying infrastructure issues, enforcing environmental regulations, and providing resources for monitoring and mitigation are essential to protecting public health and the environment. Air quality concerns at Tijuana River Valley demanded close collaboration and communication among CARB, San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD), CalEPA, U.S.EPA, the County of San Diego and other State and local agencies. International counterparts and community stakeholders were also essential partners in addressing immediate harms and building lasting solutions. Appendix B: Additional Air Quality Efforts details CARB's specific efforts in the Tijuana River Valley.

Since the inception of the California Climate Investments (CCI) program and through the end of 2024, approximately \$803.4 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) have been implemented in 35,405 border region projects, with \$544.7 million (or 68%) benefiting priority populations (disadvantaged and low-income communities and households). These GGRF projects in the border region are estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 5,184 MTCO_{2e}. CARB outreach on GGRF projects, including 281 events, across all programs in the border region have reached about 13,418 participants. Much of the outreach efforts have occurred through the Community Air Protection Program and Low Carbon Transportation Program.

Throughout 2024 CARB continued to address community air pollution issues across the border region through CAPP. Under Assembly Bill 617 (C. Garcia, Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017) 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

Under the U.S. EPA's Border 2025 Program, 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 2024 are described further in Appendix B: Additional Air Quality Efforts.

Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) continues to support the health and well-being of communities along the California–Mexico border. In 2024, OEHHA efforts focused on deepening relationships with tribal nations and frontline communities, sharing scientific tools in accessible ways, and incorporating community and Indigenous knowledge to shape how we understand and respond to environmental health challenges.

Summary of Mexico Border Activities:

- Racial Equity and Environmental Justice
- CalEnviroScreen and DAC Designations
- Fish Consumption Advisories
- Harmful Algal Blooms
- Pesticide Illnesses Education
- Climate Indicators
- Resources: Community Science

Centering Equity, Community Knowledge, and Tribal Voices

OEHHA’s Racial Equity and Environmental Justice (REEJ) team is working to ensure that OEHHA’s science and programs reflect the realities of communities most impacted by pollution, including Spanish-speaking border communities and California Native American Tribes with deep ties to the land. OEHHA’s REEJ team is focused on building tools to support equity in science and making science work for all communities. In 2024, this plan began shaping how OEHHA does border-related work, by listening more, integrating feedback based on people’s experiences and first hand knowledge, and co-creating solutions.

Mapping Pollution

OEHHA continues to improve CalEnviroScreen, a tool to identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. In 2024, OEHHA worked with tribes and partners to address gaps in tribal data, especially for drinking water systems and contamination on tribal lands near the border.

Fish Consumption:

OEHHA's Fish Consumption Advisories help communities make informed decisions about eating fish from local lakes, rivers, and coastal waters. In 2024, OEHHA provided guidance in both English and Spanish and incorporated tribal feedback into communication strategies. In border regions, OEHHA continues to update fish advisories for key water bodies including the Salton Sea, Lake Morena, and the Alamo and New Rivers.

Harmful Algal Blooms:

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) threaten water safety. OEHHA is part of a cross-agency HAB workgroup that partners closely with tribal leaders to monitor blooms and protect community health. In 2024, OEHHA expanded public access to HAB data in Spanish and English and worked with tribal partners to develop fact sheets that reflect community questions and experiences. These resources help families make safe choices about swimming, fishing, and water use."

Pesticide Exposure: Listening to Stories, Building Tools

In 2024, OEHHA completed a video titled "Tribal Voices Experiences with Pesticides," which shares stories from tribal leaders about pesticide exposure and its impacts, including communities at the border. This work is part of a larger toolkit being co-developed with tribal experts to support tribal health providers. These materials honor Indigenous lifeways and provide practical tools for preventing harm.

Supporting Climate Knowledge

OEHHA's Indicators of Climate Change in California report includes impacts that could be relevant at the border. Recent reports have included firsthand accounts and reports from California tribes. In 2024, we expanded this work by partnering with the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, the Wiyot Tribe, and others to develop new tribal climate impact reports. We are also producing a video series titled "California Tribes and Climate Change: Voices from the Frontlines.

Community Science

OEHHA and CARB continued working in 2024 with tribes and community-based organizations (CBOs) to create guidance for community science. The goal is to support communities in designing and leading environmental data collection projects.

Water

The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 7) and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 9) regulate water quality in California along the California-Mexico border. Both Regional Boards made notable progress in 2024 to address pollution in transboundary rivers. State Water Resources Control Board continues to support the Regional Boards in efforts to address transboundary flows causing pollution in state coastal waters and closing beaches.

The State Water Resources Control Board manages and contributes funding to projects addressing water quality problems arising in the rivers crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Project updates for the year 2024 include:

- New River Improvement Project Construction Progresses:
 - The New River Improvement Project addresses water quality problems related to trash, raw sewage, industrial waste, and agricultural runoff 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). Region 7 continues to assist the City of Calexico with the execution of the New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan. In 2024, the Project's construction components progressed or were fully implemented, including the successful installation of a trash diversion screen to remove solid waste from the river.
- Funding and Environmental Impacts identified for the Brown Property Restoration Project:
 - The State Water Board approved financing for the Brown Property Restoration Project in January 2024. The Project will improve water quality by removing trash and invasive species and restore the Tijuana River to its native habitat.
 - The State Water Board prepared an Environmental Impact Report for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The County of San Diego will implement the Project.



In July 2024, the Binational Technical Committee toured the New River Improvement Project trash diversion screen and noted minimal solid waste was accumulating as a result of the screen.

- Successful completion of Tijuana River Recovery Team Projects:
 - The Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team, led by Region 9 and consisting of over 30 state, federal, and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, identified locations and projects to address transboundary sediment, trash, and sewage pollution in the Tijuana River Valley, Estuary and coastal waters.
 - In 2024, two Tijuana River Recovery Team Projects, funded by the State Water Resources Control Board, were successfully completed. The Rural Community Assistance Center installed a trash boom in the main channel of the Tijuana River (PHOTO) that collected over 456 tons of trash in several storms in early 2024. In addition, the County of San Diego completed the habitat and hydrology restoration project in the Tijuana River Valley. A project to create a sediment and trash control structure in Smugglers Gulch is in planning and will be complete in 2026.



Rural Community Assistance Center Trash Boom following a small storm in February 2024.

Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 7)

The Colorado River Basin Water Board regulates and monitors discharges into the New River by controlling pollution from:

1. nonpoint sources, primarily from agricultural land, by implementing total maximum daily loads and programs for agricultural runoff (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program),
2. point sources from wastewater treatment plants regulated by National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program (NPDES) permits, and
3. conducting monthly **water quality monitoring** at the International Boundary in Calexico to determine the extent of New River pollution from Mexico, effects of the infrastructure projects in Mexicali, Baja California, and conformance with water quality standards and treaty agreements.

The Colorado River Basin Water Board collaborated with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and various agencies in Mexico to address New River pollution originating from Mexicali. Collaboration included bimonthly in-person Binational Technical Committee (BTC) meetings. The meetings in 2024 included a tour of key wastewater treatment and pumping facilities, showcasing progress made towards the rehabilitation of Mexicali's sewer infrastructure.

In July 2024, the Colorado River Basin Water Board adopted an amendment to the operative Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Colorado River Basin to establish Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and an implementation plan for Pyrethroid Pesticides in the Alamo River and New River in Imperial County. The Basin Plan Amendment is pending approval by the State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Administrative Law, and USEPA.

Raw sewage discharges into the New River occurred in Mexicali, Baja California following rain events in January 2024 (~9.9 million gallons), March 2024 (~1.4 million gallons), and August 2024 (~1.3 million gallons following the damage and flooding of a dry well).

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 9)

The San Diego Water Board identified the Tijuana River transboundary pollution as its top Environmental Justice Priority in 2017 and continues to take actions to address the long-standing impacts to disadvantaged communities in South Bay San Diego

In December 2024, the San Diego Water Board adopted Resolution No. R9-2024-0155 to approve the Lower Tijuana River Indicator Bacteria and Trash Advance Restoration Plans (ARPs). The ARP's Implementation Plan identifies potential actions by the San Diego Water Board to control sources of indicator bacteria and trash and achieve water quality objectives in the lower Tijuana River.

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) owns the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP). The SBIWTP treats an average of 25 million gallons per day of sewage from the City of Tijuana’s municipal collection system as well as dry weather transboundary flows captured by five canyon collectors in the Tijuana River Valley. After several years of noncompliance with secondary effluent standards due to delayed preventative maintenance and equipment failures and two enforcement Orders from the San Diego Water Board, USIBWC directed \$31 million to the rehabilitation of the SBIWTP between 2021 and 2024, and regained compliance with secondary treatment standards in November 2024. USIBWC is also working on an expansion project to double the facility’s treatment capacity. The maximum timeline for construction is five years. The San Diego Water Board is coordinating with U.S. EPA and USIBWC on a NPDES Permit amendment to allow increased daily treatment volumes of up to 35 million gallons a day to facilitate reductions in cross border flows of untreated sewage.

Rain events resulted in significant flooding in 2024, resulting in the permanent closure of the County of San Diego Campground in the Tijuana River Valley. In addition, beaches in South Bay from Imperial Beach to Coronado have been closed since 2021 due to sewage contamination from Mexico. Routine sampling of estuary conditions has demonstrated fish populations in the Tijuana River Estuary could not be found in surveys in 2022-2024.

Waste Tires

CalRecycle, a department within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), oversees the Tire Management Program, which is tasked with the challenge of diverting and safely managing more than 60 million reusable and waste tires generated each year in California. As part of its efforts, CalRecycle used grant funds to clean up 23,866 illegally dumped tires in the California-Mexico Border Region (Border Region).

CalRecycle Border Tire Activities

Since the Border Region has faced issues with improperly managed waste tires, California is committed to supporting activities that address these issues. CalRecycle’s Five-Year Tire Plan outlines opportunities for work in the Border Region and can be found here: [Publication Summary](#). In 2024, CalRecycle conducted activities described below related to tire cleanups and amnesty events, inspections and enforcement, and stakeholder outreach and engagement.

Tire Clean Ups and Amnesty Events

- CalRecycle and the Urban Corps of San Diego County (Urban Corps), a Local Conservation Corps, carried out cleanup efforts in fiscal year 2024-25 in California Border Field State Park. Urban Corps removed approximately 1,200 tires from the Border Field State Park (Figure 1 and Figure 2 below) in partnership with California State Parks, which granted access to the land.

- The Local Government Waste Tire Amnesty (TA) Grant Program funds applicants to conduct free amnesty events for the public to recycle their waste tires. The Local Government Tire Clean Up (TCU) Grant Program funds applicants to collect illegally dumped tires within a jurisdiction. Additionally, CalRecycle is in the process of revising the Five-Year Tire Plan for FYs 2025-26 to 2029-30.
 - Tire Clean Up (TCU) Grant Awarded to the City of San Diego - The City of San Diego was awarded \$57,169 and will utilize their TCU20 grant to remove tires from the Tijuana River Valley and other border areas for disposal.
 - Tire Clean Up (TCU) Grant Awarded to Imperial County - Imperial County was awarded \$250,000 and utilized their CalRecycle TCU20 Grant to remove approximately 12,194 tires from roadsides, public lands, and various illegal dump sites in the border region.
 - Tire Amnesty (TA) Grant award to Imperial County – Imperial County was awarded \$90,000 and utilized these funds to collect 10,472 tires in the border region by holding tire amnesty events.

Inspection and Enforcement

- In 2024, in partnership with the California Highway Patrol, CalRecycle conducted eight (8) waste and used tire checkpoints in the Border Region, including at the commercial Ports of Exit at both Otay Mesa in San Diego County and Calexico in Imperial County. Almost 1,600 trucks and vehicles that had the potential of hauling tires were inspected at the checkpoints. Two violations were served as a result of the checkpoints, and follow-up enforcement is in process.
- CalRecycle continued to analyze used and waste tire manifest data around the Southern California-Mexico border region. Used and waste tire movement in California and used tires exported from California are tracked by CalRecycle's Waste Tire Manifest System (WTMS). This WTMS database has records for used tires manifested to specific business locations in Mexico, and to the Commercial Ports of Exit at Otay Mesa, San Diego County, and Calexico, Imperial County. Initial estimates of WTMS manifest records collected in 2024 are within the same order of magnitude as reported by Mexico's federal Secretary of the Economy to have been imported within the used tire annual import quota. Implementation of SB 1181 (Hueso) authorized CalRecycle to begin the transition to an electronic manifest tracking system that will assist in further analysis and improved tracking of manifested used and waste tires in the region.
- In 2024, CalRecycle and Local Jurisdiction Tire Enforcement Agents conducted 1,066 waste and used tire inspections in the border region of San Diego and Imperial Counties. The inspections resulted in 35 violations. All violations have been resolved, and the sites are now in compliance.

Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement

In carrying out its responsibilities under the 2015 statute, Senate Bill (SB) 83 (Government Code section 99523(c)), which directs coordination of a long-term solution to waste and waste tire issues in the Border Region, CalRecycle participated in coordination meetings and contributed to status reports as described below.

- CalRecycle hosted several workshops and a tire conference in 2024.
 - June 19 and 20, 2024, CalRecycle hosted the CalRecycle 2024 California Tire Conference, which shared technical information about a variety of market development, research, and enforcement topics.
 - November 18, 2024, CalRecycle hosted the 2024 Waste Tire Market Report workshop, which shared information on waste tire flows, market insights, and trends for recycling markets for used and waste tires.
 - December 4, 2024, CalRecycle hosted the Revising the Five-Year Tire Plan Workshop to discuss plans and budgets for waste and used tire management activities for the next five years. Stakeholders from the border region are invited, and interpretation services were provided for online and in-person attendees.
- CalRecycle manages a contract that provides both verbal interpretation and written translation from English to Spanish and Spanish to English. This increases accessibility for Spanish-speaking stakeholders to tire technical conferences, documents, workshops, and trainings.
- CalRecycle participated in the USEPA Border 2025 Regional Coordinators meeting in Imperial County on January 17, 2024.
- CalRecycle presented at the US EPA Headquarters Border 2025 Scrap Tire Webinar on February 15, 2024.
- CalRecycle contributed to the 2023 CalEPA CA-MX Border Relations Council report in May of 2024.
- CalRecycle participated in the CalEPA CA-MX Border Relations Council Meeting on November 7, 2024.
- CalRecycle developed responses to Senator Padilla throughout the year, in March and December, addressing status update questions on 2014 MOU activities.



Urban Corps of San Diego County, Border Field State Park, Clean Up Team 02/05/2025



Urban Corps of San Diego County, Border Field State Park, Clean Up Tire Pile 02/05/2025.

Pesticides

Air Monitoring and Community Engagement:

In 2022 – 2023, the 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. In 2024, DPR and the Office of Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) analyzed the results and collaborated with CARB and the South Coast Air District to develop a presentation on the findings of the study. The results showed that all concentrations were below both DPR regulatory targets and health screening levels and OEHHA reference exposure levels. There are two presentations scheduled to present the study results to the ECV community, in March and April 2025.

Agricultural and Urban Surface Water Monitoring:

As part of the continuous evaluation process, the 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 DPR has 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 pesticide safety tips for fieldworkers, fieldworker labor rights, DPR's role in protecting fieldworkers and communities, and how to report pesticide incidents in one's preferred language.

Additionally, DPR partnered with Pulpo Media to stream digital radio spots across the state, including Coachella Valley, Imperial Valley, and North San Diego County via Spotify. The display ads ran on mobile, desktop, and tablet devices appearing on sites commonly visited by target demographics and achieved 884,356 impressions.

Toxics

CalEPA's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), through its San Diego Border Office, is responsible for tracking imported and exported hazardous waste through its California/Mexico Border Program. Authority to implement the DTSC Border Program is given by US EPA through its Environmental Border Program, currently named the Border 2025 Program. The US EPA Border 2025 Program, and its previous iterations, were created as a result of a bi-national agreement, called the La Paz Agreement, between the United States and Mexico. The La Paz Agreement was established for cooperation on the protection and improvement of the environment in the border area. The border area is defined in the La Paz Agreement as being 100 km north and south from the line that divides both countries.

The DTSC Border Program is comprised of four major components: 1. Import and export inspection of transboundary shipments of hazardous waste, 2. Review of import and export documents, 3. Coordination of border program workshops with US EPA and 4. Co-chair and attendance in Border 2025 meetings.

The DTSC Border Program promotes environmental stewardship between the US and Mexico and protects public health and the environment by making sure hazardous waste and hazardous materials being imported comply with Federal and State laws and regulations.

In 2024, emphasis was placed on tracking imported and exported waste. In 2024, DTSC received 23 export notifications and 1 import notification. An import notice was reviewed, and the receiving US facility was checked to assure that they were permitted to accept the wastes in question. Additionally, export notifications were reviewed, and the receiving Mexican facilities were checked to assure that they were permitted to accept the waste in question.

The DTSC San Diego Border Office also conducts coordinated northbound border truck stop 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 Monday through Friday every week. The County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health Quality (SD DEHQ) assists in conducting northbound border truck stop inspections at the Otay Mesa port of entry on Tuesday's and Wednesday's.

Additionally, DTSC conducts southbound border truck stop inspections randomly throughout the year. In the Spring and Fall of 2025 DTSC, US CBP, California Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation will conduct southbound border truck stop inspections.

Natural Resources

Fish and Wildlife

Throughout 2024, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) continued its coordination with the California-Mexico Border Relations Council and its stakeholders. To date, CDFW has awarded approximately \$4.4 million under its cross-border priority.

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 the City of Holtville. In 2024, the project progressed with final interpretive signage design and conceptual designs for habitat restoration and multi-use trails. Wildlife data collection via bird surveys, wildlife camera and acoustic recording unit review, vegetation mapping, and native seed collection also continued. The project team shared progress on restoration and trail design plans with Holtville City Council and attended the Annual Holtville Trail Walk/Run to share information about the project with locals. The Holtville project is supporting local businesses as a local engineering firm is preparing design plans. This project is also using Imperial Valley Desert Museum for signage design and interpretive materials.

Tijuana River Valley Regional Park Brown Fill Restoration Project

(Grantee: San Diego County)

This project to create designs and complete the 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.

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. Since the initial efforts of completing field surveys, soil sampling,

and environmental review, the project benefits are becoming apparent. During this last year, installed native plants have been thriving and filling into the planting rows vigorously. Where invasive salt cedar had been, recruitment of native plant species is now being observed.

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. SCC continues to participate in multiple partnerships of state, federal and local stakeholders to achieve the strategic objectives of the Conservancy, as well as those of its partners. The following is an update of SCC's project efforts pertaining to the U.S. and Mexico border region for the 2024 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. Final design and permit acquisition was awarded and initiated in 2023 and is expected to be complete in the fourth quarter of 2025. subsequently, in 2024, SCC granted \$30 million to Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association for the implementation of the project, scheduled to commence in 2026.

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 is expected to be completed in 2025. CEQA and NEPA compliance 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 initial planning phase of the project was 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 with US Navy Region Southwest, the Port of San Diego, and many other stakeholders to seek designation of the San Diego 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. The initial application wasn't successful, but the effort continues.

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 2024, the CCC convened 11 public meetings (one per month from February through December) to receive (1) progress reports on projects being pursued to help address the cross-border pollution crisis; (2) informational briefings on existing and emerging issues; and (3) presentations from relevant agencies such as the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC). The CCC also deliberated and provided staff direction on efforts to help secure additional funding for cross-border pollution prevention and treatment projects, including through letters to President Biden and Governor Newsom and direct coordination with the City and County of San Diego, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, IBWC, Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, City of Imperial Beach, San Diego State University's School of Public Health and other regional research institutions. CCC also prepared and provided a public presentation on the current state of science regarding the ecological impacts of the ongoing cross-border pollution crisis.

U.S. EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), Mexico’s Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), and binational state partners collaborated during 2024 to implement the U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program: Border 2025. Activities addressed public health and environmental transboundary issues in the California and Baja California border region. The U.S. EPA’s Pacific Southwest Office (Region 9), CalEPA, and other state partners including the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the State Water Resources Control Board (WRCB), and partner agencies in Mexico, as well as the binational North American Development Bank (NADB), completed their fifth year of the Border 2025 Program. CalEPA is a co-chair of the California-Baja California Regional Workgroup, which includes the U.S. EPA, SEMARNAT, and the Secretariat for Sustainable Development of Baja California (SMADS).

The Border 2025 Program’s projects and investments to meet its goals and objectives are tracked in the “California-Baja California Border 2025 Action Plan.” In 2024, the U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT began activities to sunset the Border 2025 program and initiated dialogue to plan for the next program.

National Coordinators Meeting

On September 10 and 11 of 2024, the U.S. EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe and her counterpart in Mexico, Undersecretary Alonso Jiménez of SEMARNAT, co-chaired the Border 2025 National Coordinators Meeting in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. The meeting celebrated 40 years of cooperation and achievements under the La Paz Agreement and reaffirmed its commitments under the fifth strategic plan, Border 2025.



Courtesy of USEPA.

Goals

Goal 1 - Improve Air Quality

There were five Border 2025 - Goal 1 (Air Quality) Task Force meetings that took place throughout the year. The task forces are divided based on their geographic areas and focus on the San Diego/Tijuana and Imperial Valley/Mexicali regions. Task Forces are co-chaired in their respective regions by the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) and the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD), along with Mexican counterparts from the state of Baja California.

During the meetings, there were presentations of ongoing efforts to address air quality in the shared airsheds. For example, one presentation focused on a pilot project using grease scrubbers to reduce particulate matter pollution from restaurants in Mexicali. Another was presented by Anely Fernandez Robledo, Head of the Air Quality Department in Baja California, on the 2023-2024 Winter Season Report and the Atmospheric Environmental Contingency Program in the State of Baja California. From the U.S. side, updates included a presentation by Shalem Aboody-López with the SDAPCD on mobility strategies for the International Border Communities Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP), and one by Carrie Wheeler from EPA Headquarters who spoke on the binational efforts to model and inventory emissions in Mexico and the United States. Other notable presentations include one by Rosa Elena Parra of Redspira, centered on the topic of the [Urban Heat Island Effect](#) and the efforts to accurately map it. There was also a presentation by Enrique Villegas from the Sonoran Institute on their project “Mexicali Fluye,” which aims to improve water and air quality through the implementation of nature-based solutions along the New River.

Along with the public task force meetings, the U.S. EPA granted the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) an Inflation Reduction Act American Rescue Plan (IRA ARP) Enhanced Monitoring grant to monitor pollutants near the New River including particulate matter (PM), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), Hydrogen Sulfide, Ammonia, and Benzene-Toluene-Xylenes. The ICAPCD began work to complete this air monitoring effort in late 2024.

Goal 2 - Improve Water Quality

Binational Technical Committee (BTC) meetings took place monthly throughout 2024 in both the Mexicali and Tijuana border regions of California. The International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) hosted the first meeting in Mexicali, Baja California. These meetings occur to allow partners in the U.S. and Mexico to share progress on numerous water infrastructure projects on both sides of the border. In Mexicali, participants included EPA Region 9 Water Division, California Regional Water Commission, the North American Development Bank (NADB), the Mexican Comisión Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA), and the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Mexicali (CESPM). In Tijuana, participants included EPA Region 9 Water Division, NADB, IBWC, IBWC’s Mexican counterpart CILA, the State of Baja California Secretaría para el Manejo, Saneamiento y Protección de Agua (SEPROA), and the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Tijuana (CESPT).

At the end of May and again in September, the Water Division’s Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) team met with partners from the NADBank to discuss progress on numerous

water infrastructure projects along the Arizona and California border regions. These projects are receiving funding through the BWIP. NADBank and EPA also met with the Mexican counterpart agency CONAGUA to discuss program priorities and project progress for jointly funded projects.

Under [Minute 328 and the Statement of Intent](#) signed by Mexico and the U.S. federal governments in July 2022, both countries committed to reducing transboundary wastewater in the Tijuana River watershed. On the U.S. side of the border, the expansion and rehabilitation of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (ITP) is the largest infrastructure project. This plant is managed by the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and the EPA continues to work with them on the expansion project, as well as coordinate on other infrastructure works on both sides of the border. The design and construction contractors for the project started work in September 2024. This project will double the capacity of the treatment plant from 25 million gallons per day (MGD) to 50 MGD, with the ability to treat peak flows up to 75 MGD.

Projects in Mexico made significant progress in 2024 as well. A new 18MGD wastewater treatment plant at San Antonio de los Buenos (SAB) was completed with plans to be fully operational by the end of April 2025. This plant will significantly increase water quality at the coast as it will treat wastewater flows before discharging into the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, in Mexico the rehabilitation of the Los Laureles I Pump Station to reduce flows into Goat Canyon was completed and pump station PBCILA was brought back online in September 2024 to divert flows from entering the Tijuana River.

Goal 3 - Promote Materials Management, Waste Management, and Clean Sites

The California-Baja California Goal 3 Task Force hosted its first meeting of the year on January 30. It included a presentation focused on Baja California, including authorized sites for specially managed waste and illegal dumps, as well as updates from partner agencies, Tribal Nations and the public.

On February 15, 2024, EPA Pacific Southwest Region, in collaboration with EPA South Central Region and EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR), International Branch - hosted a webinar on the sustainable management of scrap tires for communities along the U.S.-Mexico Border. There were 100 people from local, state, and federal government, not-for profits, the private sector and the public in attendance to learn about policies and best practices for used tire management. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality kicked off the webinar with its new Arizona-Sonora Tire Action Plan. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality described its efforts to engage with scrap tire generators and processors to find end uses for scrap tires while hosting used tire collection events. Finally, CalRecycle shared information on its Five-Year Plan for Waste Tire Management, including cleanups, market development workshops, and training for Mexico-based waste tire haulers. EPA ORCR closed out the webinar with a summary of national and international used tire management resources.

On September 30, the Goal 3 Task Forces of EPA Regions 9 and 6, in collaboration with the Goal 3 Policy Workgroup and SEMARNAT, hosted the second Border 2025 webinar focusing on circular strategies for the sustainable management of scrap tires. The webinar was attended by more than 100 people from the U.S. and México. It featured speakers addressing topics such as: tire-

derived aggregate for road repair and light rail; the city of Laredo, Texas' scrap tire ordinance on tire disposal fees; and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas' tire shredding and recycling plant. The webinar concluded with a moderated roundtable to address questions on the challenges of scrap tire recycling and strategies for incentivizing added value for used tires as a critical component of a circular economy.

On November 13, EPA Region 9 hosted a webinar on Zero Emissions Recyclables Collection in México. Representatives from Bike Recycling MX and Biciclando shared their ongoing work that uses ultra-lightweight vehicles to collect recyclables in Mexico City and Hermosillo, Sonora. The discussion provided examples of simple strategies used to incentivize recyclables collection in a manner that also minimizes harmful emissions.



Courtesy of USEPA.



Courtesy of USEPA. Bike Recycling MX, México City, 2024.

Goal 4 - Joint Preparedness for and Response to Hazardous Environmental Emergencies

U.S. EPA contracted and oversaw First Responder Awareness (FRA), First Responder Operations (FRO) and Incident Command System (ICS) training in Mexicali, Baja California on November 19-23, 2024, at the Universidad Xochicalco. Over 125 first responders and emergency management personnel were trained throughout the five days. In addition, San Diego-Tijuana and Mexicali-Calexico plans are being updated and joint emergency notification plans continue to be exercised.



Courtesy of USEPA.



Courtesy of USEPA.

Cross-cutting Program Activities

Community Lead Awareness Curriculum

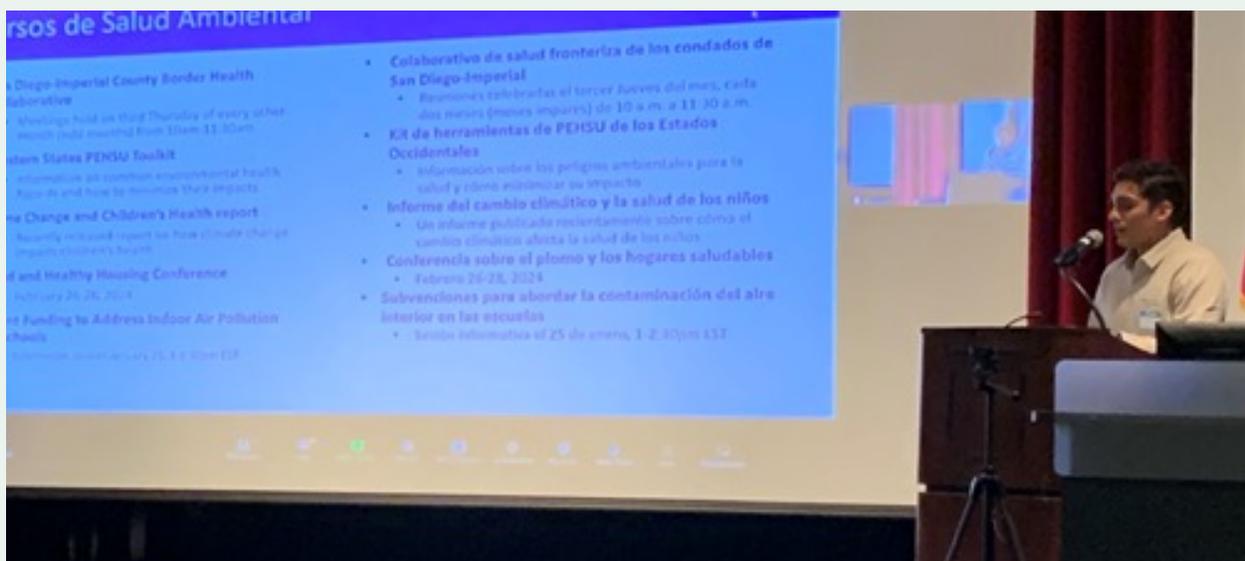
On August 28 and 29, EPA facilitated Community Lead Awareness educational sessions in partnership with the Imperial Valley community-based organization, Comité Cívico del Valle (CCV). The free educational sessions used the Lead Awareness Curriculum to educate community members about sources of lead exposure, its impacts on human health, and specific actions families can take to protect children and their communities from lead exposure. On August 28, as part of CCV's Cafecito de Salud, EPA facilitated an "Understanding Lead (Información sobre el plomo)" session for 18 members of the public. The following day, August 29, CCV hosted a "Train-the-Trainer" session that EPA facilitated for organizations in Imperial Valley. Train-the-Trainer sessions gave 12 participants practical resources, the opportunity to network with other community leaders, and specific training on how to modify and use the Lead Awareness Curriculum as part of the work they are already doing to raise awareness and educate others within their communities.

Regional Tribal Operations Committee

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 updates on the RTOC Border Workgroup, Border 2025 Program and discussions on Hazardous Waste and Pesticides: proper disposal of disinfectants and trajectory of foreign paraphernalia.

California-Baja California Regional Coordinators Meeting

On January 17, 2024, EPA gathered for Border 2025's hybrid California-Baja California Regional Coordinators Meeting at the San Diego State University, Imperial Valley campus in Calexico, California. In total, there were over 50 non-EPA attendees, including elected officials, community organizations, state and local government and members of the public. The four and a half hour meeting had report outs from each of the four Border Program goals as well as information shared on the Regional Tribal Operations Committee Border Workgroup and environmental health.



Courtesy of USEPA.

Energy

Engagement with Baja California

Given the integral links between California and Baja California in both the electric grid and broader economy, the California Energy Commission (CEC) has remained committed to actively engaging with the Baja California Energy Commission in recent years. In August 2024, CEC renewed its MOU with the Baja California Energy Commission in a signing ceremony that was held in Sacramento. The MOU is focused on sharing best practices and knowledge on energy efficiency, industrial decarbonization, zero-emission vehicles and other topics. This signing took place as part of a broader delegation from Baja California to California, which included a site visit to Tesla and meetings with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), UC Berkeley, UC Davis, California Independent System Operator (CAISO), and CEC.

Under the renewed MOU, Commissioner McAllister participated as a keynote speaker at the November 2024 Baja California Energy Conference (EnerBaja) hosted in Rosarito, where he discussed building and appliance efficiency standards, grid integration and reliability, Baja California's potential expanded participation in the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), and the role of load flexibility and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in enhancing grid stability and reducing emissions.

In June of 2025, Commissioner Noemí Gallardo delivered opening remarks at the 2nd Binational Forum on Sustainable Maritime Transport and Ports of the Three Californias, hosted by the Institute of the Americas in Ensenada, highlighting California's goals for clean transportation, port electrification, and regional decarbonization. As Lead Commissioner for Lithium Valley, she emphasized California's leadership in critical minerals, energy storage, and workforce development, while strengthening ties with Baja California and other binational partners.

Engagement with Sonora

The State of Sonora has been working to implement a sustainability plan developed in conjunction with the Mexican Federal Government and other stakeholders to advance clean energy. 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. Governor Newsom and Governor Durazo met in March 2025 in Sacramento to formalize the partnership between California and Sonora on clean energy development. An MOU was signed at the meeting between the two states focused on energy efficiency, electric mobility, industrial decarbonization and other topics. The Sonora Plan

focuses on expanding renewable energy generation and clean technology manufacturing in Northern Mexico, which aligns with California's goals for regional decarbonization and grid integration. The MOU supports these efforts by encouraging technical exchanges, market exploration for renewable exports, and binational research partnerships.

Engagement with the Federal Government

The CEC maintains interest in engaging with the Mexican federal government, as they assume most of the authority over energy policy. President Claudia Sheinbaum, who assumed office in October of 2024, completed her PhD thesis at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and has emphasized energy transition as a priority for her administration. Building on the momentum of the new federal administration, the CEC seeks to continue engagement with counterparts at the Comisión Nacional para el Uso Eficiente de la Energía (CONUEE), a federal agency that has appliance efficiency authority; El Centro Nacional de Control de Energía (CENACE), the Mexican electric grid operator; and Secretaría de Energía (SENER), the Mexican secretariat of energy. LBNL will be a key strategic partner in engagement at the Federal level. The CEC has previously collaborated with CONUEE and SENER under earlier MOUs, providing technical support on appliance standards and building codes, among other topics. These relationships can be re-energized under the Sheinbaum Administration, particularly given the shared institutional ties and Mexico's renewed focus on the clean energy transition.

Transportation

Caltrans District 11 encompasses the border regions of San Diego and Imperial counties, where it is actively working to advance California's transportation priorities in alignment with the California-Baja California Border Master Plan. This comprehensive blueprint serves as a strategic guide for coordinating transportation investments and policy decisions between the U.S. and Mexico. It focuses on improving border infrastructure, increasing the efficiency of cross-border movements, and reducing environmental impacts. In 2024, the district made significant progress in addressing congestion, enhancing mobility, and supporting economic growth through various projects and initiatives.

In 2024, California's border crossings processed over 16.3 million pedestrians, more than 31.3 million personal vehicles, and over 1.6 million commercial trucks, underscoring the significant role the region plays in both national and international trade. The Calexico West Land Port of Entry (POE) and Otay Mesa POE, which are among the busiest in the United States, experienced considerable growth in vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

To alleviate the impact of congestion, Caltrans, alongside federal agencies like U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP), has been exploring innovative technological solutions. This includes the Border Wait Time System, which provides real-time information on border wait times, and the Otay Mesa East POE project, aimed at enhancing mobility through improved infrastructure and tolling systems. Additionally, a mobile app for border wait times is under development, and a future appointment system for commercial vehicles at the Calexico East POE is in the works, aimed at improving the flow of goods and travelers across the border.

2024 saw several key initiatives and ongoing projects that reflect Caltrans District 11's commitment to sustainable development and cross-border collaboration. A major focus continues to be reducing environmental impacts through initiatives such as the Binational Rail Strategy and the feasibility study to reinstate service to the Desert Line, which seeks to alleviate truck traffic by revitalizing freight rail services. To further address environmental and community challenges, Caltrans is working to transition from diesel-powered vehicles to zero-emission alternatives, with feasibility studies underway for truck parking facilities and ZEV charging stations. Additionally, the Clean California Program is improving the aesthetic and environmental quality of key border areas by installing welcome monuments in San Diego and Imperial counties. Through these projects and ongoing efforts, Caltrans District 11 is committed to enhancing cross-border transportation infrastructure, reducing pollution, and creating a more efficient and sustainable binational transportation system.

Transportation Section

The California–Mexico border is home to seven international crossings, two of which are among the busiest in the United States. While the current cross-border movement of people and goods supports economic growth and opportunity, it also places strain on nearby roads and highways that serve border communities. Additionally, this flow and the associated vehicle idling contribute to air quality concerns. Caltrans, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are responsible for border mobility and enforcement. These agencies are collaborating on innovative solutions and exploring opportunities to create a safe, integrated, efficient, and secure transportation system along the California–Mexico border.

Joint Working Committee

On December 4–5, 2024, Caltrans District 11 hosted the annual meeting of the U.S.–Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC). The committee is primarily composed of transportation professionals from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Mexico’s Secretariat of Infrastructure, Communications, and Transportation (SICT), with participation from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), Mexico’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE), departments of transportation (DOTs) from the four U.S. border states, and representatives from the six Mexican border states.

The JWC’s core mission is to promote efficient, safe, and cost-effective cross-border transportation while supporting binational cooperation in land transportation planning. Its objectives include strengthening communication and coordination between both countries, assessing current and future infrastructure needs, and evaluating transportation demand and its impact on existing systems.

One of the JWC’s key initiatives is the development and coordination of Regional Border Master Plans, which aim to align U.S. and Mexican infrastructure planning. Other priorities include organizing a U.S.–Mexico Border Wait-Time Peer Exchange Roundtable to address congestion at international ports of entry (POEs) and conducting analyses of border wait times and emissions to assess environmental impacts.

California-Baja California Border Master Plan

The California–Baja California Border Master Plan (BMP) is a binational, comprehensive roadmap designed to coordinate the planning and delivery of ports of entry (POEs) and transportation investments along the California–Baja California border. The most recent BMP was approved in 2021 by an international delegation of transportation officials. Nearly 40 agencies from both the U.S. and Mexico, representing federal, state, regional, and local levels, participated in the process. The plan identifies nearly 200 POE-related transportation projects on both sides of the border, representing an estimated investment of approximately

\$13.5 billion in the California–Baja California region over the next 20 years.

In addition, the BMP outlines more than 30 strategies aimed at achieving climate goals, reducing air pollution, mitigating community impacts, and improving the cross-border movement of people and goods. The development of the BMP has been jointly managed by Caltrans and Baja California’s Secretariat of Infrastructure, Urban Development, and Territorial Reorganization. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTIC) are key partners in development of the BMP.

Impacts of Border Delays

Tens of thousands of personal and commercial vehicles travel between California and Baja California each day. However, travelers frequently encounter unpredictable traffic congestion and long delays at border crossings. Wait times at the seven existing ports of entry (POEs) routinely exceed two hours. These delays are not only frustrating for pedestrians and drivers, but they also have significant negative impacts on the environment, the economy, and the overall quality of life in border communities.

Binational Transportation Investment

Border communities are among the most underserved in the state, experiencing fewer benefits and a disproportionate share of the negative impacts associated with California’s binational transportation system. To mitigate the effects of border operations and congestion, Caltrans—working in partnership with several U.S. and Mexican agencies—is implementing a range of innovative strategies and infrastructure improvements. These initiatives aim to support California’s climate goals, reduce air pollution, address community impacts, enhance the movement of people and goods, and strengthen collaboration between the United States and Mexico.

Advanced Technology Corridors Border Pilot Project

An important component of California’s broader strategy to reduce vehicle congestion and cross-border wait times is the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). These systems enhance transportation safety, mobility, and productivity by integrating advanced communications technologies into both transportation infrastructure and vehicles. ITS includes a wide range of wireless and wireline communications-based information and electronic technologies.

A key application of ITS is the development of an integrated technological network that provides continuous, reliable border wait time data. This data supports operations, security, management, and planning decisions at the local, regional, and national levels in both the U.S. and Mexico. The Border Wait Time System (BWTS), which employs ITS technologies, delivers real-time information to

drivers about wait times at various ports of entry, enabling more informed travel decisions and helping to accommodate growing trade volumes between California and Mexico.

Currently, the northbound border wait time system is undergoing its biannual maintenance cycle. All sites are powered by solar panels and rechargeable solid-state batteries. Maintenance activities include cleaning solar panels, vehicle detection sensors, and wireless communication antennas; dusting interior cabinet components; testing batteries; verifying system connections; and replacing any damaged components.

As part of the Otay Mesa Commercial Vehicle Crossing remodel, some BWTS readers must be relocated. The maintenance contractor is in the process of securing site access and finalizing the installation schedule.

In support of these efforts, SANDAG has developed a mobile application that is currently in the testing phase. Once wait time data is validated and equipment installation at the commercial crossing is complete, the app will be publicly launched and offered free of charge. Over time, the application will be expanded to include southbound wait time information as well.

The southbound border wait time system was implemented under Project 11-427504. This project involved extending the fiber optic network to the San Ysidro border crossing, connecting it to existing infrastructure along the eastern segment of State Route 905, and integrating southbound wait time data for all California–Mexico border crossings.

Currently, southbound wait time information is partially available—limited to passenger vehicle traffic at San Ysidro and Otay Mesa—through the Caltrans QuickMap website and mobile app. Caltrans is working to upload data for additional crossings, including commercial routes. This data will first be released on a test site and subsequently made available to the public through the official QuickMap platform.

Otay Mesa Port of Entry

The Otay Mesa POE is the busiest commercial port in California. It processed more than \$24.2 billion in exports and \$38.1 billion in imports in calendar year 2024. Additionally, the Otay Mesa POE processed more than 2.8 million pedestrians and more than 6.5 million vehicles.

Otay Mesa CHP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility

The Otay Mesa Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility (CVEF) processed over one million trucks in 2024, making it the busiest CVEF in the California–Baja California region. In January 2023, Caltrans broke ground on an expansion project that included the addition of a third lane and a weigh-in-motion scale system to accommodate increased truck volumes anticipated from the Otay Mesa Port of Entry (POE) modernization. The third lane opened to traffic in December 2023. Plant establishment for the project began in March 2024 and continued throughout the year.

State Route 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry

Caltrans and SANDAG is leading the delivery of Otay Mesa East, a new land port of entry between the U.S. and Mexico. This facility will use state-of-the-art technology to provide fast, predictable, and secure crossings. It will be the first U.S. land port of entry to use dynamic tolling to manage demand via tolled approach roads and an intelligent transportation system to alleviate supply chain bottlenecks and deliver reliability, particularly critical for time-sensitive trips and cargo. When complete the Port of Entry will be donated to the Federal Government. Caltrans will retain the State Commercial Vehicle Inspection Facility.

The SR 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry project is in final design and early construction phase. The federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Agreement was awarded in 2023 but the \$150 million award was executed and obligated in 2025. Caltrans completed construction of the new SR-11, which terminates at the future Port of Entry. Negotiations, to begin design and construction of the Port of Entry, with the US Federal Government continued through December 2024. Mexico completed construction of their port of entry and access road facilities in 2024.

In December 2024, Caltrans requested funding allocation to begin early work package. This package includes construction of drainage facilities, grading and paving activities, in preparation for the Port of Entry.

Additional project developments in 2024 included:

- A Risk Register update session with project stakeholders (August)
- Initiation of an updated Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study (September)

State Route 905 Landscaping Project

The landscaping improvements project for State Route 905 (SR-905) began construction in September 2022, with the plant establishment phase starting in August 2023. This project is designed to fulfill the environmental mitigation requirements outlined in the SR-905 environmental document and to address the absence of highway planting and beautification along this key gateway into California. Plant establishment activities continued throughout 2024.

Calexico West Land Port of Entry Modernization and Expansion Project

The \$224.7 million Calexico West Land Port of Entry (POE) Modernization and Expansion Project is designed to support the mission requirements of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and other federal agencies by expanding non-commercial vehicle and pedestrian inspection and processing capacity at California's third busiest land POE. This port connects the agriculturally rich Imperial Valley with Mexicali, the capital of the Mexican state of Baja California, which has a population of over 1 million.

The project includes the expansion of northbound pedestrian inspection lanes, the demolition of legacy facilities, and significant earthwork. Phase 1, completed in 2018, included northbound and southbound lanes for privately owned vehicles, northbound primary and secondary inspection canopies and equipment, a new operations building, and associated sitework tailored to the sloping terrain.

This modernization effort will increase processing capacity while enhancing security and operational efficiency. In 2019, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) received \$191 million to fund Phase 2A, which was completed in spring 2024. In 2021, GSA secured additional funding for Phase 2B through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, enabling construction of a new pedestrian processing building. The agency also received supplemental funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to support expanded sustainability initiatives at the port. GSA completed the programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) for Phase 2B in fall 2022, evaluating its potential environmental impacts. The Design-Build contract for Phase 2B was awarded in July 2024, followed by the award of the Construction Management Services contract in December 2024. Construction on the final phase is scheduled to begin in summer 2025, with completion anticipated by winter 2028.

Calexico East Expansion Project

The Calexico East expansion project involved widening the off-system bridge over the All-American Canal at the U.S.-Mexico border, approximately 0.7 miles south of State Route 7. To minimize traffic impacts during construction and reduce

costs, the bridge was widened on its east side. The project added four northbound lanes—two for commercial vehicles and two for passenger vehicles. Additionally, the northbound pedestrian walkway was shifted westward to accommodate the new passenger vehicle lanes. The project also included new concrete barriers and minor modifications to existing landscaping, drainage, signage, and lighting systems.

Construction continued throughout 2023, and the presidential permit required to expand and operate the port of entry (POE) was approved in July 2023. In November 2023, representatives from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the Imperial County Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and other regional partners held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Calexico East POE to celebrate the completion of the first phase of the port’s expanded bridge infrastructure. Construction Contract Acceptance was achieved in August 2024; total project cost is \$32.5 million.

Calexico East Land Port of Entry Joint Operations System Project

The project will explore the implementation of a joint operations system at the Calexico East Port of Entry (POE), which will also introduce the first land POE appointment system for commercial vehicles—and potentially for passenger vehicles. Based on current border conditions, the system will allow commercial vehicle users to pay for a designated appointment window to cross the border.

The project also proposes the use of a mobile application to relay real-time border conditions, including wait times and incident updates, to border crossers. This would provide travelers with timely traffic information, enabling them to better plan their trips.

A feasibility study was completed in June 2024 to assess existing border crossing conditions and identify the requirements necessary to implement a commercial vehicle appointment system. A Project Initiation Document is anticipated to be completed in winter 2026.

Truck Parking and Zero-Emission Vehicle Charging Stations Project

Parking shortages, combined with regulatory requirements, often force truck

operators to either park earlier than necessary or stop in unsafe locations. These challenges contribute to shipping inefficiencies, delays, and safety risks. Additionally, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles account for a disproportionate share of on-road fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollutants that pose significant health risks.

To mitigate harmful diesel emissions, it is essential to accelerate the transition from diesel-powered vehicles to cleaner, zero-emission alternatives. A feasibility study was conducted to identify potential sites, evaluate their suitability, and develop conceptual plans for four future truck parking facilities, as well as medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) charging and fueling stations in San Diego and Imperial counties. The study focused on locations along critical freight corridors designated by the California Transportation Commission's Clean Freight Corridor Efficiency Assessment. As a result, 22 candidate sites were selected for further analysis in the next phase of the project. The feasibility study was completed in June 2024, and the Project Initiation Document is expected to be finalized in winter 2026.



Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility from Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office.



SR-905 Landscaping from Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office.



Calexico International Gateway Monument from Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office.



San Ysidro International Gateway Monument from California District 11 Public Information Office.

San Diego – Imperial County Desert Line Feasibility Study

International commerce between Mexico and California depends heavily on commercial truck traffic, resulting in a single-mode freight system that is increasingly unsustainable, inefficient, and environmentally harmful. The proposed reinstatement of the Desert Line aims to reduce truck traffic at ports of entry and mitigate the environmental and economic impacts associated with commercial vehicle idling at the border. The Desert Line seeks to address current capacity limitations on the San Diego mainline.

A proposed study will evaluate the feasibility of restoring freight rail service on the San Diego and Arizona Eastern (SD&AE) “Desert Line” Railroad. This 150-mile short-line railroad traverses Baja California, Mexico, and runs through eastern San Diego County into Imperial County. In 2023, a State Planning and Research (SP&R) grant to fund the study was approved. The study will include a market assessment and a cost estimate for reinstating service along the Desert Line. Completion of the study is anticipated by fall 2025.

California - Mexico Binational Rail Strategy

Freight transportation from commercial vehicles contributes significantly to local pollution across California. To address this, a proposed Binational Rail Strategy aims to establish a sustainable freight and passenger rail system between California and Mexico. The strategy will outline coordinated rail investments, policies, strategies, and programs designed to reduce the environmental impacts of freight rail, particularly on-air quality. The Binational Rail Plan will include stakeholder engagement, an assessment of existing rail network conditions, the development of planning concepts, identification of potential funding sources, and policy recommendations. In 2024, a \$425,000 State Planning and Research (SP&R) grant was approved to support the development of this plan. The study is expected to be completed by September 2026.

Clean California Projects

The Clean California Program has created opportunities to enhance and beautify gateway areas at the state’s borders. As part of this effort, welcome monuments were selected for installation in San Diego and Imperial counties to greet the traveling public entering California. Construction of the \$2 million Calxico Gateway Monument in Imperial County was completed in June 2023, with an unveiling ceremony held in July 2023. The unveiling ceremony for the \$2.9 million San Ysidro Gateway Monument in San Diego County took place in June 2024.

Health

In 2024, 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

[The 2022 Border Health Status Report](#) to the Legislature (released in 2024) highlights 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 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 region and California. Ultimately, the report sheds light on the significant geographic and ethnic disparities that exist for each of the health indicators covered in this report.

Binational Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Tabletop Exercise

OBBH collaborated with the CDPH's Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program on the development, coordination, and implementation of a tabletop exercise held in May 2024. The meeting allowed California and Baja California public health officials to simulate a binational HAI emergency with potential for severe outcomes including community deaths and sustained transmission that would require an urgent, multi-sector joint binational response. The following agencies participated from California: California Department of Public Health (CDPH)-Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH), CDPH-Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI), County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and Imperial County Public Health Department (ICPHD). Agencies from Baja California included the following: Health Services Institute from the State of Baja California (acronym in Spanish: ISESALUD BC) and the Mexican Institute of Social Security (acronym in Spanish: IMSS). As a result of the exercise, public health officials agreed to implement training sessions for Baja California hospital staff focusing on environmental cleaning practices in hospital settings. The HAI team, OBBH, and Baja California Health Services Institute worked jointly on the development and implementation of these trainings which were held throughout 2024. Participants from California and Baja California also agreed to maintain close communication between OBBH, HAI, and Baja California public health officials to identify additional areas of potential collaboration.

Binational Rickettsiosis Symposium and CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) Publication

OBBH collaborated with ISESALUD Baja California (Health Services Institute from the State of Baja California) to organize a binational rickettsiosis symposium for medical providers and students held in April 2024, in Tecate, Baja California. The objective of the symposium was as follows: 1) provide an epidemiological overview of rickettsiosis in Baja California and California and, 2) discuss the need for early diagnosis, opportune treatment, laboratory detection, and epidemiologic surveillance of rickettsiosis.

Additionally, over a 2-year period (2023-2024), public health officials in California identified 6 cases of rickettsiosis with exposures in Tecate, Baja California. OBBH supported the investigation of these cases and co-authored a CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) summarizing the situation and response to these cases. The MMWR publication is titled "Severe and Fatal Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever After Exposure in Tecate, Mexico – California, July 2023 – January 2024".

2024 Exploring Approaches for Enhancing Reporting Mechanisms for Infectious Diseases in the U.S. Southern Border Region

OBBH organized an event that convened representatives from U.S. federal, state, and local levels of public health officials in San Diego, CA in July 2024. The meeting was titled “2024 Exploring Approaches for Enhancing Mechanisms for Infectious Diseases in the U.S. Southern Border Region”. The focus of the meeting was as follows: 1) provide updates on current activities related to binational case surveillance 2) share innovative solutions for binational case surveillance. and 3) review of regional and binational health security frameworks such as the Operational Protocol for US-Mexico Binational Communication and Coordination on Disease Notifications and Outbreaks. As a result of this meeting participants formed a committee to formally develop recommendations for revising the existing version of the [US-Mexico Binational Communication and Coordination on Disease Notifications](#) and Outbreaks. These efforts were initiated in the latter half of 2024 and will be finalized mid-2025. Next steps will include sharing recommendations for protocol revisions with Mexican public health officials and jointly developing the next version of the binational communication protocol.

Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments: San Diego and Imperial County

OBBH collaborated with National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) on an assessment aimed at understanding farmworkers’ experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic in San Diego and Imperial counties. Data collection for this project was initiated in late 2023, and a technical report summarizing results from the assessment was published in 2024. The report was disseminated among local health jurisdictions, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders. It was also utilized to develop COVID-19 and seasonal influenza vaccination strategies and health education campaigns for avian influenza.

2024 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 well-being of Latino communities in the month of October. The 2024 edition theme was “Juntos por la Prevención/ Together for Prevention” and focused on providing health promotion workshops and medical screenings to increase access to services related to behavioral health, degenerative diseases, communicable diseases, women’s health, and nutrition to promote prevention.

San Diego & Imperial Counties Border Health Collaborative (Collaborative)

The San Diego & Imperial Counties Border Health Collaborative (Collaborative) is a project coordinated by 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. In 2024, the Collaborative held seven meetings with speakers providing information on different health topics including COVID-19, influenza, RSV, air quality, behavioral health, and the Tijuana River Watershed.

Community Health Worker (CHW)/ Promotora Trainings

OBBH coordinated a Community Health Worker (CHW) and Promotores training project aimed at enhancing COVID-19 prevention and vaccine awareness among underserved migrant and Latino populations in rural California regions. OBBH partnered with the National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) to develop and deliver the educational training sessions. The training curriculum focused on four key areas: health disparities among farmworkers, healthcare access, COVID-19 prevention, and vaccination.

Using a train-the-trainer model, NCFH delivered one in-person training in Fresno County and one virtual training with statewide participation in March 2024. Sessions were conducted in English and Spanish to ensure accessibility. Following the trainings, CHWs and promotores were invited to participate in community outreach efforts to help disseminate vital COVID-19 information among farmworker and rural communities.

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 2024, two public meetings were held by the OBBH Advisory Group to discuss ongoing border health work related to avian flu (H5N1), Mpox, resources for farmworkers and their families, and environmental health.

Safety

Efforts to ensure border safety remain 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 support border security objectives by disrupting Transnational Crime Organizations within the region. While this collaboration supports national security and public safety, CalOES does not participate in or support federal immigration enforcement. Simultaneously, the California Maritime Security Program continued collaborating with the United States Coast Guard on maritime recovery, security, and intelligence.

Operation Stonegarden (OSPG) Program

In 2024, Imperial County, San Diego County, and Riverside County were awarded OSPG grant funds to secure the United States' borders along routes of ingress from international borders including 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), 15 participating agencies target Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) involved in various illicit activities (Appendix C.1). The collaborative effort between ELC and Imperial Valley OSPG partners aims to disrupt TCO operations by targeting their reliance on motor vehicles and travel corridors for smuggling.

Similarly, the OSPG for the San Diego Sector, administered by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, involves 27 participating agencies (Appendix C.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 increases, demanding involvement from state and local law enforcement to combat border-related crime, including

drug and human trafficking, and safeguard domestic security.

OPSG Accomplishments:

In 2024, the Imperial County Sheriff's Department (ICSO) and Friendly Forces conducted multiple highway enforcement operations in the ELC area of responsibility, resulting in significant seizures, including approximately \$1,420,355 in bulk cash, 474.54 kg methamphetamines, .10 kg of heroin, 259.97 kg of fentanyl and bulk powder, and the confiscation of 34 firearms (Appendix C.3).

Additionally, agencies participating in the San Diego Sector OPSG program achieved notable outcomes. They conducted 18,673 vehicle stops, issued 1,318 citations, made 1,021 arrests, and seized substantial quantities of narcotics, including marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin, and fentanyl. Furthermore, \$1,871,347 in currency and 112 firearms were seized (Appendix C.4).

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 75 arrest, narcotics cases that generated seizures of 736.18 kg of meth, 32.45 kg of heroin, 605.49 kg of cocaine, 92.70 kg of fentanyl powder, 179,588 fentanyl pills, 3 firearms seizures, \$727,814 worth of U.S. currency seizures, and recovered 25 stolen vehicles.

An exemplary display of interagency cooperation was Operation Gridlock, executed on October 28th and 29th and November 7th and 8th, 2024. 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 474 vehicle stops, 52 citations, 25 arrests, and seizures of various narcotics (Appendix C.5).

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 work closely with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the United States Navy and focus on maritime recovery, security, and intelligence. 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. 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 and is led by the USCG and includes 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 that extend across the border with Mexico. The Coast Guard and Cal OES are developing the Maritime Domain Awareness Common Operating Picture with information dashboards. The dashboards will include real-time information on the Maritime Border between Mexico and California.

In 2024, 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 Engagements

In 2024, Cal OES extended its cross-border disaster preparedness efforts through a virtual coordination meeting with Baja California Sur's Civil Protection agency, reaffirming shared safety priorities in a region heavily frequented by Californians and U.S. citizens. Wildfire collaboration was further strengthened by joining CAL FIRE and Mexican local, state, and federal officials for Baja California's inaugural wildfire mitigation session. In California, Cal OES continued to work with Mexico's 10 consulates by providing training to consular staff on earthquake preparedness, assistance to Mexican nationals in California, and human trafficking prevention.

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 2024, the California State Warning Center received 7 spill incident notifications from the IBWC and followed notification protocols by notifying all U.S. stakeholders.

In 2024, Cal OES supported the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR), a nonprofit organization, by sharing insights into state emergency response protocols. TRNERR is leading a NOAA-funded project to strengthen binational flood emergency response and resilience, in collaboration with local, state, federal, and Mexican 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, and stakeholders from Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to establish and sustain operable and interoperable public safety communications along the US and Mexico border. The SWBCWG has actively engaged in the strategic priorities identified for 2024 (Appendix C.6). While this collaboration supports national security and public safety, CalOES does not participate in or support federal immigration enforcement.

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 June 2024, Cal OES participated in a Cross Border 911 Collaboration meeting in Kissimmee, Florida, organized by the National Emergency Number Association. Leaders from the ten US and Mexican border states convened to address communication challenges in the border region.

Cal OES continues to collaborate with 911 service providers and wireless carriers to implement location-based routing directly to Mexican PSAPs. Additionally, Cal OES continues to enhance Geographic Information System (GIS) data in the California Next Generation 911 system to support location-based routing to the appropriate PSAP.

Listos California

Housed within the Cal OES, Listos California is a statewide initiative that strengthens community disaster preparedness by partnering with trusted local messengers who are deeply connected to vulnerable communities in areas at moderate to high risk of disaster. Through these partnerships, the program provides culturally relevant preparedness resources and training—available in over 20 languages, including Spanish and Indigenous languages of Mexico—to communities at higher risk and who have and continue to face barriers to access to this vital information.

In 2024, \$25 million in Listos California Grant funding was awarded to 63 trusted messengers, including community-based organizations, federally recognized Tribal Nations in California, and community emergency response teams. Their collective efforts resulted in more than 9,450 community events, reaching over 5.4 million individuals from target populations such as people with disabilities, seniors, geographically isolated individuals, those experiencing homelessness, farmworkers, immigrants and refugees, and households with limited English proficiency.

ListosCalifornia.org continues to be a key tool in this work, offering culturally competent, accessible, in-language materials designed to strengthen disaster preparedness and resilience by addressing persistent barriers through a more inclusive culture of disaster preparedness across California so no communities are left behind.

Appendix A

Figure 1. Trade Statistics with Mexico¹

(Billions of U.S. dollars)	2022	2023	% Change
U.S. Exports to Mexico	322.74	334.04	3.5%
CA Exports to Mexico	33.25	33.52	0.8%
U.S. Imports from Mexico	475.21	505.85	6.4%
CA Imports from Mexico	61.50	64.30	4.5%
U.S. Total Trade with Mexico	797.96	839.89	5.3%
CA Total Trade with Mexico	94.75	97.81	3.2%

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

Appendix B:

Additional Air Quality Efforts

Tijuana River Valley Response

In October 2024, CARB's Monitoring and Laboratory Division (MLD) worked with the SDAPCD to deliver a hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) monitor and equipment (Teledyne API T101, H₂S calibration gas) to San Diego and provided support in the form of technical guidance to operate the monitor. In response to SDAPCD's request for further support, CARB is lending the H₂S monitor to the district through the end of 2025.

Through 2024, CARB's Research Division worked with both the SDAPCD and the County of San Diego to provide guidance on air filter specifications that address H₂S concerns in Tijuana River Valley and be most effective for their residential air filtration programs.

CARB's Enforcement Division worked with SDAPCD to develop a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) proposal to fund indoor air filtration in San Diego County. Additionally, CARB staff worked alongside SDAPCD to facilitate \$2.7 million in incentive funding for a residential air filtration program, aimed at communities impacted by air pollution in the Tijuana River Valley.

Clean Air Act Good Neighbor Plan for Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards

In January 2024, CARB staff coordinated with U.S. EPA on the federal implementation plan known as Good Neighbor, to understand its implications for border and tribal communities in the California-Mexico border region.

Imperial County/Mexicali Air Alerts, Forecasts, Mobile Application & Website

With funding provided by U.S. EPA under a Clean Air Act, Section 105 grant, CARB continued to support the maintenance and operation of the Imperial Valley Air website and mobile application (www.imperialvalleyair.org). These tools provide public access to information on current air quality conditions, air quality forecasts, and health impacts for the Imperial County-Mexicali border region.

Improving Biomass Burning Estimates in Mexico In 2024 CARB continued a study that aims to improve emission estimates from burning activities in the California – Baja California and Sonora regions of Mexico, using satellite-based methods coupled to existing models. In 2024, the project research team focused on developing and evaluating a machine learning model for crop identification using remote sensing data from the Imperial Valley Region and constructing a Python-based model to estimate biomass burning emissions. The project team also conducted ground truthing activities throughout the summer and launched

community engagement efforts in the Mexicali Valley, including 150 surveys and interviews with farmers and stakeholders to understand the perceived health impacts of biomass burning. Moving forward, the team will continue refining their emissions estimation tools by integrating ground truthing findings to enhance data accuracy and support more effective mitigation strategies for the region.

San Ysidro Monitoring Pilot Project

In 2024, CARB staff deployed eight Clarity Nodes that measure particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), along with one MA350 monitor that measures black carbon at locations identified by community members in San Ysidro. CARB staff also worked closely with a local community-based organization to recruit and train community members so they could support the ongoing operation of the air quality monitors. This project, funded by U.S. EPA, aims to quantify the air quality burden, increase air quality awareness, and build monitoring capacity within the San Ysidro community.

Technical and Capacity Building Support for Border Region Partners

In December 2024, CARB's Monitoring and Laboratory Division (MLD), along with CARB's Border Affairs Coordinator, held a virtual training on low-cost PM_{2.5} sensors, for the City of Tijuana. It was attended by City staff and representatives that maintain their network of sensors around the city. Additionally, CARB' MLD staff assisted with a donation of low-cost PM_{2.5} sensors to the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) to support their network and monitoring efforts.

CARB's Involvement in the Caltrans Addendum to the 2021 Border Master Plan

In early 2024, CARB provided recommendations for the development of a Zero Emission Mobility Strategy for the states of California, Baja California, and Baja California Sur. The Zero Emission Mobility Strategy is an addendum to the broader 2021 Border Master Plan (BMP), a comprehensive, binational approach to coordinating the planning and delivery of international land ports of entry (POE) projects and the transportation infrastructure projects serving the region's POEs. California participates in the BMP convened by the U.S. EPA, and California's involvement is led by Caltrans. The effort was a limited task and involved participating in one large working group meeting, a discussion with the consultant, and written comment submissions to Caltrans.

CARB provided feedback clarifying California and Mexico vehicle emission policies, including distinctions between state and local policies taken, including suggestions on how to frame policies in less controversial ways. Staff also made corrections on California policy details such as the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II), Clean Vehicle Rebate Project (CVRP), zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) outreach, and truck regulations; highlighted cost as a key metric to study in the Mexico vehicle market – incremental cost of ZEVs new and used in that country; elaborated on CARB's ongoing engagement with other border activities, including the U.S. EPA Border Air Quality Task Force; and contributed strategies for expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the need for a reliable electricity supply. Comments recommended prioritizing fast charging in rural and lower income communities.

California Highway Patrol Industry Appreciation Day

In February 2024, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) hosted Industry Appreciation Day at their Calexico CHP scale. This annual event joined law enforcement departments, community, and business partners from the region and other states to celebrate bi-national initiatives and fleet deployment.

Truck Regulation Implementation Group (TRIG) Border Meetings

In March, June, and September 2024, CARB's Mobile Source Control Division (MSCD) hosted Truck Regulation Implementation Group (TRIG) Border meetings. The purpose of the TRIG Border meetings is to facilitate discussions between affected parties in the border region of California and Baja, Mexico. Constructive discussion and information sharing among stakeholders on implementation of the Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation was the primary focus. The TRIG Border group is convened and led by CARB, UC Alianza Mexico, and Volkswagen Truck and Bus Mexico.



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

California Climate Investments

One example of a CCI funded project implemented in the border region through CARB's Clean Transportation Incentives is the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) program SR-15 Transportation Equity & Affordable Housing Task Force in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego. In March 2024, City Heights Community Development Corporation (CDC), a nonprofit based in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego, was awarded a STEP Planning Grant in 2021 which culminated in a final report, "Development without Displacement," developed by the multi-generational, resident-led Transportation Equity & Affordable Housing (TEAH) Task Force. The engagement they did as part of their Planning grant helped City Heights CDC be awarded a STEP grant in 2024 to implement a suite of active transportation improvements in the area between two transit plazas and four (4) new affordable housing developments in the neighborhood.

The STEP project improvements include supporting infrastructure for two new bikeways being constructed by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), quick-build pedestrian safety infrastructure on key routes connecting the new affordable housing developments to under-utilized transit plazas, and landscaping and lighting to make connections between bikeways, pedestrian

routes, and the transit plazas safer and more welcoming for the City Heights Community. The project was awarded \$3.3 million and is estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 87 MTCO_{2e}, reduce energy use equivalent to 6,855 gallons of gasoline, reduce vehicle miles traveled by 117,650, result in net travel cost savings of \$72,000, and support 34 jobs.

Bi-National Border Crossing Celebration

In April 2024, San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and Bali Express Services (Otay Mesa) hosted the first bi-national border crossing celebration. Heavy-duty zero-emission trucks from the Bali Express Services fleet were showcased between the U.S. and Mexico border at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. The bi-national effort marked a significant step toward global heavy-duty zero-emission transportation with support on charging infrastructure installed by SDG&E.

Tribal Cultural Burning - Annual Prescribed Fire Trainings in the border region

In the spring of 2024, CARB's Tribal Liaison coordinated Tribal participation in the annual California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) prescribed fire training, held in San Diego. These annual trainings are for all federal, state, local and Tribal partners to review the latest research, program updates, discuss challenges and accomplishments, and provide overviews for new staff. Further information can be found in CARB's CalEPA Tribal Advisory Council reporting, on CARB's website.

Tour of Calexico and Imperial

On September 12, 2024, CARB staff, partner organizations, and Zero-emission Vehicle (ZEV) Equity Task Force members participated in the Imperial Valley Community Tour hosted by Comite Civico del Valle, visiting key locations in Calexico and Imperial. The tour provided an opportunity to witness firsthand the transportation challenges and environmental conditions faced by these communities and to foster informed, community-driven policy discussions. The tour highlighted charging stations, the Calexico Border and Idling Vehicles, Future Calexico Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC), Calexico High School Zero-emission Vehicle Program and Imperial Valley College: Lithium Industry Workforce Training. Through the tour, several key insights emerged about transportation barriers, limited access to healthy, affordable food, and the severe environmental challenges in the region, including high levels of air pollution due to border traffic and the deteriorating Salton Sea that exists. Approximately 50 people from government, industry and community-based organizations were in attendance.

Input Session on Clean Car Regulations

On September 13, 2024, CARB staff, in partnership with Comite Civico del Valle, hosted a public input session to provide information about CARB’s clean car regulations. The input session allowed CARB staff to engage with community members, understand community perspectives about transportation, build relationships and enhance knowledge and capacity zero-emission vehicles, transportation emissions, climate change impacts, and available resources and ensure inclusivity by reaching out to Spanish-speaking audiences and other underrepresented groups. Approximately 25 community members attended the input session and participated in breakout sessions.

Bi-national Memorandum of Understanding Support

In November 2024, CARB supported and attended a kick-off meeting for the MOU between CalePA and Secretariat for Environmental and Sustainable Development of Baja California. The MOU aims to improve air quality in the border region.

Enforcement

The tables below provide a summary of enforcement activities on diesel vehicles and equipment near the border region in 2024. Table 1 summarizes deployments of CARB’s remote sensing device known as PEAQS, used to select the highest-emitting vehicles to be pulled over for full inspection. Tables 2 and table 3 summarize all inspections, including with and without PEAQS. Table 2 is by program inspection, but one vehicle can be subject to multiple inspection types. Table 3 is the total count of unique vehicles inspected for at least one program.

Table 1: 2024 PEAQS Deployments Near Border

Location (City)	Deployment Days	Heavy Duty Vehicles Inspected	Inspected	Citations Issued
Calexico	4	2,954	55	39
Otay Mesa	7	12,449	309	173
Winterhaven	4	2392	79	51
Total	15	17,795	443	263

Table 2: 2024 Diesel Program Inspections Near Border (includes PEAQS deployments)

Program	Inspections	Citations	Notes
Commercial Vehicle Idling	322.74	334.04	3.5%
Off-road equipment	33.25	33.52	0.8%
CARB	475.21	505.85	6.4%
HD Inspection/Maintenance	61.50	64.30	4.5%
Truck & Bus	797.96	839.89	5.3%

Note: for this table, one vehicle may be subject to multiple inspections.

Table 3: Total Number of Individual Vehicles/Equipment Inspected in Border Region in 2024

Total number of vehicles or equipment inspected	4,999
Off-road equipment	
EJ areas: Total number of vehicles/equipment inspected	1,978

Appendix C: Safety and Emergency Management Efforts

Appendix C.1 - 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
- Blythe 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 C.2 - 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
- Costa Mesa Police Department
- Hawthorne police Department
- La Habra 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 C.3 2024 El Centro Sector OPSG Statistics

2024 El Centro Sector OPSG Stats	
Mileage	241,295
Overtime Hours	26,886
Vehicle Stops	12,461
Citations	7,441
Arrests	378
Prosecution Cases	207
Narcotic Cases	77
Cocaine (kg)	42.01
Methamphetamines (kg)	472.54
Heroin (kg)	0.10
Fentanyl (kg)	259.97
Other Narcotics (kg)	11.40
Currency Seized	\$1,420,355
Firearms Seized	34

Appendix C.4 2024 San Diego Sector OPSG Statistics

2024 San Diego Sector OPSG Stats	
Overtime hours	102,894
Vehicle Stops	18,673
Citations	1,318
Arrests	1,021
Narcotic Cases	378
Marijuana (kg)	276.07
Cocaine (kg)	931.26
Methamphetamines (kg)	1,774.07
Heroin (kg)	34.68
Fentanyl (kg)	358.94
Currency Seized	\$1,871,347
Firearms Seized	112

Annex C.5 2024 Operation Gridlock Statistics

2024 Operation Gridlock Stats	
Vehicle Stops	474
Citations	52
Arrests	25
Methamphetamines (kg)	97.93
Fentanyl (kg)	3.052

Appendix C.6 - 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.

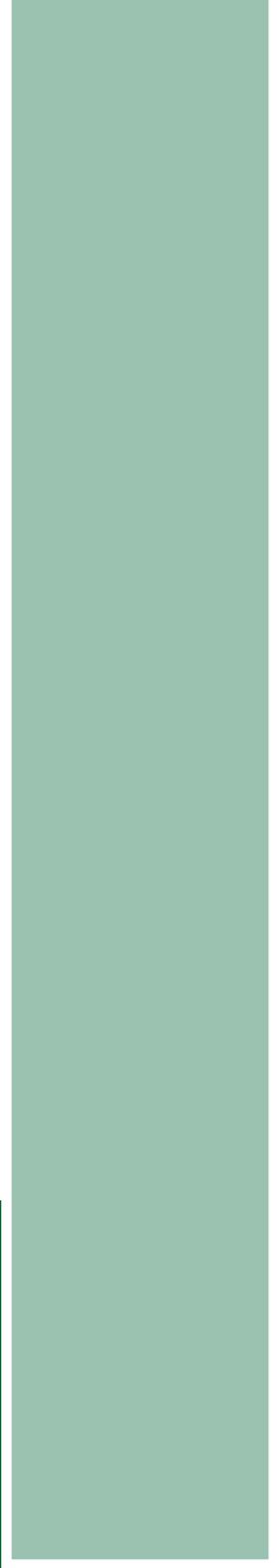
Strategic Priority 4: Facilitate policy and planning efforts for interoperable systems by coordinating with partners across all levels of government and providing subject matter expertise for interoperable systems governance, planning, and operations.

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.

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

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