

## MEETING MINUTES

California-Mexico Border Relations Council  
May 14, 2026 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PST  
(or until close of business)

Simultaneous interpretation was provided in Spanish and English.

The agenda for this meeting can be located on the BRC webpage: <https://calepa.ca.gov/border-affairs-program/california-mexico-border-relations-council/>

### **1. Welcome – Acting Chair Maurice Lyles, Deputy Secretary for Environmental Protection for the State of California**

Acting Chair Lyles called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees to the California-Mexico Border Relations Council meeting. He noted the council serves as the state's central organizing body for coordinating cross-border partnerships.

Acting Chair Lyles offered a land acknowledgment, recognizing and honoring the land and the peoples who have stewarded it throughout generations.

Acting Chair Lyles provided brief framing remarks, noting that California and Mexico share family, community, workforce, economic, and environmental resources across their 140-mile shared border. He emphasized that the global climate crisis creates a shared sense of urgency to build a deep, sustainable, climate-resilient cross-border community.

Public Comment: None.

### **2. Meeting Logistics and Interpretation Services Announcement – Chair Designee Maurice Lyles, Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection**

Acting Chair Lyles turned proceedings over to the interpretation team to provide instructions in both English and Spanish. Ryan Atencio at the California Environmental Protection Agency provides details on how to submit public comment and access interpretation in-person and on Zoom.

### **3. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of Quorum – Acting Chair Maurice Lyles, Deputy Secretary for Environmental Protection for the State of California**

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Acting Chair Maurice Lyles. The meeting was held via Zoom and in-person at the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

At 1:06 p.m. roll call was taken, and all Council Members<sup>1</sup> and/or their alternates were present for the duration of the meeting as follows:

#### **Council Agency    Council Member**

1. **CalEPA:** Present BRC Acting Chair and Deputy Secretary  
Maurice Lyles California Environmental  
Protection Agency
2. **CalOES:** Present Yvonne Dorantes, Deputy Director, Legislative &  
Governmental Affairs  
Alternate of Director Nancy Ward  
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
3. **CalHHS:** Present Daniel Torres, Chief Equity Officer & Special  
Counsel to the Secretary  
  
Alternate of Secretary Kim Johnson  
California Health and Human Services Agency

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<sup>1</sup> Membership of the BRC is statutorily defined in Government Code section 99522

- 4. **CalSTA:** Present Bonny Nyaga, International Policy Advisor  
Alternate of Secretary Toks Omishakin  
California State Transportation Agency
- 5. **CDFA:** Present Secretary Karen Ross  
California Department of Food and Agriculture
- 6. **GO-Biz:** Present Diana Dominguez, Trade and Investment Representative for the Americas  
Alternate for Director Dee Dee Myers  
California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development
- 7. **BCHS:** Present Erica Gonzalez, International Trade and Investment Representative
- 8. **CNRA:** Absent
- 9. **U.S. EPA:**Present Laura Ebbert, Director  
Appointee for Martha Guzman Aceves, Regional Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9

A quorum of 7 of 8 members was established.

**4. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Draft Minutes for the Previous Meeting on September, 12, 2025 – Chair Designee Maurice Lyles, Deputy Secretary**

The Council reviewed the September 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Councilmember Torres moved as follows:

“Motion to approve the draft meeting minutes for the previous BRC meeting on September 12, 2025.”

Second: Councilmember Karen Ross seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Roll call vote:

<b>Council Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>
1. CalEPA: Deputy Secretary Lyles	Aye
2. CalOES: Deputy Director Dorantes (alternate)	Aye

3. CalHHS: Chief Equity Officer Torres	Aye
4. CNRA: Absent	Aye
5. CalSTA: International Policy Advisor Nyaga (alternate)	Aye
6. CDFA: Secretary Ross	Abstain
7. GO-Biz: Trade and Investment Representative Dominguez (alternate)	Aye
8. BCSH: Representative Gonzales	Abstain

Motion passes with 5 votes in favor, 2 abstain, 1 absent.

### **5. Introduction of CalEPA's newly appointed Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations**

Acting Chair Lyles introduced himself to the council. Before his introduction, he offered an acknowledgment of his late predecessor, Sabine Telugan. He expressed gratitude for the foundation she built and acknowledged those who worked with her professionally and knew her personally, noting what a gift she was to tribal communities, governments, tribal communities generally, and to the work of the council. He stated his intention to build upon that foundation to further advance laws that improve lives and better serve tribal, border, and environmental justice communities.

Acting Chair Lyles provided the following background:

- Appointed as CalEPA Deputy Secretary in January 2025; assumed the role fully in January 2026
- Previously served as Governor's Southern California Regional Director with External Affairs from 2019 through 2025
- Prior to that, served in U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer's office on criminal justice work
- His portfolio as Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations, Tribal and Border Affairs focuses on: strengthening government-to-government relations with tribal nations, advancing cross-border and binational collaboration, and ensuring communities most impacted by environmental challenges have a meaningful voice in policy development and implementation

Acting Chair Lyles briefed the council on CalEPA's Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development of Baja California (SMADS). He noted the MOU focuses on state-to-state environmental cooperation, with Phase 1 centered on information sharing around solid waste management (particularly waste tires, given their prevalence in the Tijuana River), as well as air quality, hydrogen sulfide, plastic pollution, and microplastics.

Phase 2 work, planned for the coming months, will focus on information sharing with Mexico on hydrogen sulfide and air quality, as well as plastic pollution and microplastics and their health impacts through ingestion.

### **6. Discussion of Reconvening of the Solid Waste Working Group**

Acting Chair Lyles provided background on the Solid Waste Working Group (SWWG):

- a. Established under SB 83 in 2015 under the council
- b. Comprised of members from CalRecycle, California State Parks, Waterboards, and CalEPA
- c. Mission: coordinate solutions for community problems associated with waste tires, solid waste, and excessive sediment threatening water quality and public health in the California-Mexico border region
- d. The working group has not been formally active and the council discussed formally reconvening it CDFA

Laura Ebbert, USEPA: Expressed excitement about renewed focus on solid waste issues. Noted USEPA is engaged through the Border 2025 program on a special area of emphasis around solid waste, meeting regularly with DTSC and other partners on California-Baja solid waste issues. Invited the SWWG to connect with that existing body to ensure the two groups are complementing rather than duplicating each other. Flagged that the next meeting of the existing Border 2025 solid waste group will be at the World Waste Management Workshop on May 20th from 9 AM to noon, focused on Baja California imports/exports of hazardous waste and other solid waste topics across the border.

**Public Comment:** Joon Suh confirmed there was no public comment for this item.

**Motion:** Acting Chair Lyles moved to convene the California-Mexico Border Relations Council's Solid Waste Working Group.

Motion: Acting Chair Lyles moved as follows:

“Motion to convene the California-Mexico Border Relations Council's Solid Waste Working Group.”

Second: Councilmember Karen Ross seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Roll call vote:

Council Member	Vote
1. CalEPA: Deputy Secretary Lyles	Aye

2. CalOES: Deputy Director Dorantes (alternate)	Aye
3. CalHHS: Chief Equity Officer Torres	Aye
4. CNRA: Absent	Aye
5. CalSTA: International Policy Advisor Nyaga (alternate)	Aye
6. CDFA: Secretary Ross	Abstain
7. GO-Biz: Trade and Investment Representative Dominguez (alternate)	Aye
8. BCSH: Representative Gonzales	Abstain

Motion passes with 5 votes in favor, 2 abstain, 1 absent.

## 7. Border Resiliency Plan presentation by the San Diego Association of Governments

Acting Chair Lyles introduced Kim Smith, Senior Regional Planner at SANDAG and Project Manager for the California-Baja California Border Resiliency Plan.

Kim Smith provided an overview of the Border Resiliency Plan, including objectives, project area, interagency task force, progress to date, and next steps.

### What is the Border Resiliency Plan?

- Funded by a Caltrans climate adaptation planning grant awarded in fall 2024
- Will develop a comprehensive plan to address climate resilience and impacts to communities and transportation networks in the border region
- Will build on existing work by border region community leaders, agencies, and stakeholders, rather than starting from scratch
- Will act as a platform to pull existing work together, identify partnership opportunities, and build toward more coordinated action on environmental issues

### Project Area:

- Communities within 10 miles north and south of the border, from the Pacific Ocean east to the California-Arizona border
- Also addresses how people move across and beyond the project area

### Climate Hazards Being Analyzed (4 categories):

- Temperature: Increasing frequency, intensity, and duration of heat waves; increased risk of heat-related illness; strain on electric grids
- Precipitation: Flooding from extreme rain events; drought and dust storms from lack of rain; heavy precipitation worsens sewage pollution by overburdening treatment plants
- Wildfire: Longer, less predictable fire seasons; increased air quality impacts from smoke; evacuations and road closures
- Sea level rise and storm surge: Coastal flooding, cliff and bluff erosion, impact to coastal infrastructure

## **Interagency Task Force:**

- Formed with binational representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal governments
- Policy guidance from SANDAG Borders Committee
- Project Development Team: SANDAG, Caltrans, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the state of Baja California

## **Progress to Date:**

- 5 task force meetings held
- Literature review completed and separate report finalized
- Spatial mapping in development
- Input gathered on vulnerable communities and climate hazard impacts
- Research underway on potential climate adaptation solutions
- Public Survey #1 completed in April — over 200 responses; key themes: communities most affected by extreme heat and heavy rain/flooding; impacts affect all forms of commuting
- Virtual open house held in February
- Pop-ups at transit stations and food drives
- Stakeholder presentations and one-on-one interviews completed

## **Next Steps:**

- Spring/Summer 2026: Finalize vulnerable communities and hazard impact summary report; begin developing climate adaptation solutions list and project list; continue Phase 2 community engagement on solutions
- Quarterly task force meetings throughout
- Fall/Later 2026: Adaptation analysis and strategies report
- Early 2027: Draft Border Resiliency Plan released for review
- June 2027: Plan completion and grant wrap-up

Acting Chair Lyles thanked Smith for the presentation and commended the cross-border analytical approach. He noted his personal experience as a San Diego native and the firsthand realities of border communities — sewage flows during rain events, evaporation and air quality impacts during dry periods — and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive binational study.

Public Comment: None.

Acting Chair Lyles announced a 15-minute recess at approximately 1:36 PM, noting the council would reconvene at 1:51 PM.

## 8. Discussion on Cross-Agency Collaboration - Councilmember and local partner updates on interdepartmental and interagency collaboration on border programs and projects

Secretary Acting Chair Lyles invited council members and CalEPA BDOs to provide updates on cross-agency collaboration and recent border efforts.

**Caltrans District 11:** Provided updates on transportation investments in the border region:

- Final segment of the statewide rail line connecting local businesses to the Otay Mesa port of entry opened in 2025
- Reconstruction and final design of the future automated Otay Mesa East port of entry ongoing; in August 2025 requested funding allocation for additional construction package covering grading, cyber security, utilities, and procurement of long-lead items; construction began November 2025
- Imperial County: The Calexico Intermodal Transportation Center (funded with state ATP funds) opened this week, serving as a regional hub for bus-based and pedestrian-friendly access improvements
- Federal partners launched the Calexico West port of entry modernization and expansion project, completion expected at a high-priority timeline
- Planning studies advancing: Commercial Vehicle Appointment System exploring technology and processes for a first-of-its-kind appointment system; Freight Rail Study establishing a sustainable rail system between California and Mexico, expected to be completed by the end of this year; launch of updated California Border Master Plan bringing together approximately 40 agencies from both sides of the border

**CHHSA:** Provided updates on public health and housing border initiatives:

- Medical Board of California pilot: Licensed physicians from Mexico providing services in select clinics in California; program continuation approved due to success
- Imperial County housing investments:
  - 5 new manufactured homes providing permanent housing for low-to-moderate income households displaced by the 2021 brushfire; funded through Community Development Block Grants totaling approximately \$19M
  - Expanded water waste treatment facility in Imperial County including evaporation columns and updated sewer pipeline to improve wastewater collection
  - \$1.5M awarded to a jurisdiction for HVAC system upgrades and emergency generators at several community centers, serving as cooling centers during extreme heat
  - \$300K for a general plan assessing housing, infrastructure, utilities, and services in colonias in Imperial County
- San Diego County housing:
  - Launch Recovery California — single family rehabilitation program for homeowners

earning up to 120% of area median income

- Homebuyer assistance program launched; 4 San Diego households assisted to purchase homes outside high flood risk areas; 91 on waitlist
- City of San Diego received \$12M, county received \$16M to repair disaster-impacted infrastructure and develop hazard mitigation plans

**CalOES:** Provided updates on emergency preparedness and cross-border coordination related to FIFA World Cup 2026 and LA28 Olympics:

- Outreach to all participating consulates including 10 Mexican consulates in California; facilitating one-on-one engagements
- Leading Special Events Task Force covering fire, law enforcement, homeland security, logistics, communications, and preparedness planning
- Participated in October 2025 exercise alongside 20 consulates focused on real-time coordination among U.S. and international partners
- Participated with consulates, U.S. Department of State, and overseas missions in tours to establish operational protocols ahead of major events
- Binational Emergency Communication Workgroup meeting held; hosted by San Diego Office of Emergency Services and Office of Border Health Operations; focus on cross-border coordination, communication protocols, and emergency response priorities
- Current workgroup activities: reviewing binational contact roster, developing notification flow charts, aligning activation levels, conducting upcoming binational exercises, identifying training opportunities
- State Threat Assessment Center working closely with California Highway Patrol and California National Guard
- Partnership with U.S. Coast Guard, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and SEMAR to enhance coastal security
- State Threat Assessment Center and State Warning Center continue to track and share updates on cross-border pollution

*Note: Council Member Yvonne Dorantes presented on behalf of CalOES.*

**GoBiz:** Provided updates from international trade and economic development teams:

- International Trade: Participated in Expo Monterrey Mexico to promote California advanced manufacturing and sustainable industrial solutions; created business development opportunities connecting California firms with manufacturers implementing AI-powered defect detection and wastewater recycling solutions
- Upcoming delegation to Mexico to connect California businesses with water technology solutions and address Mexico's water challenges
- USMCA discussions ongoing with businesses navigating trade policy and tariff dynamics;

GoBiz maintaining resources and tools on website

- Southwest Border Regional Commission: In September 2025, approximately \$3M in funding awarded for Imperial County projects supporting water infrastructure, workforce development, Lithium Valley education initiatives, and economic development; recipients included City of El Centro, City of Calexico, Imperial Irrigation District, Imperial County, and San Diego State University
- California Jobs First: Southern Border Coalition awarded approximately \$4.9M across 19 projects focused on economic resilience, workforce development, sustainability, and equitable growth; examples include Grid Alternatives (solar installation training), Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation (solar panel and battery cycling infrastructure planning), and RASA (organic waste processing and composting infrastructure)
- California Competes Tax Credit: Recent awards in the border region concentrated in advanced manufacturing, battery and energy storage, aerospace, food manufacturing, and freight technology; companies include Ideanomics (battery/truck chassis in Orange County), Glid Technologies (grid technology in Riverside County), and California Nutritional Products (food manufacturing in Inland Empire)

**CDFA:** Secretary Ross highlighted the emergence of New World Screwworm — a parasitic fly not seen in the region for decades, now making its way north from the south. CDFA is working with USDA on surveillance (traps along the border), public information campaigns, and sterile insect technology (releasing sterile flies to interrupt the mating cycle). Currently receiving sterile flies from Panama while a new facility is being built in Texas. Important implications for cattle crossings at ports of entry in Imperial County. Secretary Ross emphasized the importance of clinics and veterinary providers being on the lookout.

**USEPA Update (Cross-Agency Collaboration):** Laura Ebbert highlighted two recently funded projects through the Border 2025 program via the North American Development Bank:

- \$40,000 to the San Diego-Imperial County Border Collaborative to plan and implement an environmental health symposium covering air and water quality, lithium extraction, and issues along the Tijuana River
- Funding for a Binational Water Reuse Regulatory and Technology Assessment being implemented by the Institute of the Americas of California, San Diego, and the San Diego Foundation; analyzing water reuse best practices; expected to lead to a binational water reuse forum in California-Baja California

USEPA also held two virtual hazardous waste management workshops in June and December 2025 covering import/export regulations, hazardous waste determination, and electronic waste management in Mexico. A third workshop is planned for May 20th from 9 AM to noon.

Note: Acting Chair Lyles acknowledged the presence of representatives from Padilla's office (Artemis) in the audience and expressed appreciation for their attendance.

Public Comment: None.

## **9. Discussion on Tijuana River Coordination and Response - Councilmember and local partner updates on the ongoing efforts related to transboundary pollution in the Tijuana**

Air Resources Board • Department of Pesticide Regulation • Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery • Department of Toxic Substances Control Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment • State Water Resources Control Board • Regional Water Quality Control Boards

## River

Acting Chair Lyles provided a brief CalEPA framing, noting California has been engaged in solutions for years. Key CalEPA investments noted:

- \$38 million in projects to address water quality issues stemming from cross-border rivers and coastal waters
- Approximately \$50 million authorized through Proposition 4 for water quality infrastructure projects, with guidelines being developed by the waterboard; grant opportunities anticipated to open in June 2026

### **9a. San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board Update** *Nolan Riley, Resource Control Engineer, presenting on behalf of Executive Officer David Gibson*

Riley provided an update on current water quality conditions and transboundary flows, and on the waterboard's coordination with USIBWC.

#### **Current Conditions:**

- South Bay beaches have been closed for over 1,600 days since December 2021
- Despite infrastructure improvements in Tijuana including construction of an 18-million-gallon-per-day wastewater treatment plant, daily dry weather transboundary flows continue — predominantly comprising untreated domestic and industrial wastewater from Tijuana
- Root cause: Insufficient capacity in Tijuana's wastewater collection, conveyance, and treatment system; population has grown from approximately 50,000 in 1950 to over 2 million today, while infrastructure has not kept pace
- Capacity limitations at critical pump station PD1 in Mexico have prevented full operation of PBC1 (dry weather river diversion structure) at full capacity
- Current daily dry weather transboundary flows: approximately 8–12 million gallons per day, down from approximately 20 million gallons the prior week and close to 40 million gallons in preceding months
- Tijuana River estuary has seen near-collapse of fish populations; public has lost access to a historically intact estuary and coastal segment
- Disadvantaged communities in Imperial Beach, Nestor, and San Ysidro bearing the primary impacts
- Beyond water quality: transboundary flows are driving elevated hydrogen sulfide levels throughout South Bay communities; emerging research on aerosolization of pathogens from untreated wastewater is concerning

#### **USIBWC Coordination:**

- USIBWC owns the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP), which treats influent from Tijuana and discharges treated effluent approximately 3.5 miles offshore via the South Bay Ocean Outfall

- USIBWC has largely complied with effluent limitations in their NPDES permit since November 2024, following years of chronic non-compliance stemming from underinvestment in operations/maintenance and storm damage
- On April 8, 2026, the San Diego Waterboard adopted an amendment to USIBWC's NPDES permit authorizing treatment of an additional 10 million gallons per day of sewage from Mexico; USIBWC has been sustaining 35 million gallons per day of treatment for over a month
- June 10th San Diego Waterboard meeting: USIBWC headquarters staff will provide a comprehensive update on spill and transboundary flow events over the past year, influent action levels, source control measures in Mexico, the state of the Tijuana River Valley and ocean, and ongoing rehabilitation and expansion of the SBIWTP from 25 to 50 million gallons per day capacity

### **Other Waterboard Updates:**

- Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee: Chaired by Executive Officer David Gibson, meets quarterly with federal, state, local, and NGO partners
- Ongoing projects: County of San Diego's Saturn Boulevard air quality hotspot solutions; County's proposed sediment basin in Smugglers Gulch; Nelson Sloan Quarry Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project; Tijuana River to Estuary Tidal Restoration Program
- Trash boom update: Two-year pilot project funded at \$4.7 million by the State Water Resources Control Board; has captured over 1,500 tons of trash this wet season alone (approximately double last year); project will run out of funding before the next rain season; nonprofits RCAC and Altra Terra are pursuing additional funding through multiple pathways
- State Water Resources Control Board allocated \$2.6 million in Cleanup and Abatement Account funds to the San Diego Waterboard in March 2026; \$1.4 million dedicated to a sediment quality assessment of the Tijuana River Valley and estuary; sampling expected to begin summer 2027
- In April, Riley joined Assembly Member David Alvarez's office on a tour of the San Antonio de los Buenos wastewater treatment plant in Mexico and met with CESPT to discuss improvements to Tijuana's collection and treatment system

### **9b. San Diego Air Pollution Control District Update *Dr. David Solomon, Regional Air Monitoring Chief***

Solomon provided an update on the district's air quality and hydrogen sulfide monitoring and air purifier efforts.

#### **Air Purifier Program:**

- Approximately 12,000 air purifiers distributed to residents in Imperial Beach, San Ysidro, and Nestor communities
- Funded initially with approximately \$2.7 million; distributed approximately 10,000 units
- Governing board directed the district to provide up to 3 air purifiers per household for the approximately 40,000 households in the affected area; estimated cost: approximately \$10

million total

- San Diego County recently approved an additional \$4 million to purchase smaller air purifier units (more than 1 per household); kicking off in July 2026
- Current gap: approximately \$6 million additional funding needed to meet the goal of 3 purifiers per household
- Program outreach conducted through county public health, local schools, community-based organizations, local health providers, social media, and flyers

### **H2S Monitoring:**

- Three hydrogen sulfide monitoring sites established in Nestor, San Ysidro, and Imperial Beach
- Tracking H2S levels on a minute-by-minute basis; posting hourly averages on district website
- H2S advisories issued to listserv when levels exceed 30 parts per billion (CARB's California standard)
- Coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies and researchers on monitoring data

**Council Discussion:** Acting Chair Lyles asked whether there are ways to optimize distribution of air purifiers, noting the opportunity to leverage promotoras (health workers) and community-based outreach strategies. Solomon agreed additional outreach strategies would be helpful and welcomed ideas and collaboration. He confirmed the current county-funded program starts in July.

Acting Chair Lyles asked for the total number of air purifiers needed to protect all residents in affected communities, and the total cost estimate. Solomon confirmed:

- Approximately 40,000 households in the affected area
- Goal of 3 purifiers per household directed by the governing board
- Estimated cost: approximately \$10 million beyond the initial \$2.7 million
- Current funding: \$4 million additional from county; estimated remaining gap approximately \$6 million

### **9c. CalEPA BDO Updates on Tijuana River**

**CARB:** Radhika Majhail (CARB, Environmental Justice and Equity Branch) provided an update on CARB's supporting role:

- Continued support through the AB 617 Air Protection Program: monitoring, outreach, and actions to reduce emissions and exposure in impacted communities
- Facilitated approximately \$270 million in funding from Community Air Protection incentives to support residential electrification efforts
- Administered a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) through CARB's SEP program — approximately \$134,000 to distribute air filters to affected residents

- Supported community-based monitoring efforts in the Tijuana River Valley
- Provided hydrogen sulfide monitoring equipment to the San Diego Air Pollution Control District within one week of receiving a request: one H<sub>2</sub>S analyzer and one H<sub>2</sub>S gas calibration cylinder
- Developed a dedicated webpage to provide updates on CARB's efforts and connect residents with available programs and the Air Improvement Relief program by the air pollution control district

**OEHHA:** Paula Torado Plazas provided an update:

- H<sub>2</sub>S data has measured levels exceeding chronic reference exposure levels (RELs) of 30 parts per billion at multiple locations near the Tijuana River, including near locations with children and vulnerable populations
- Sources of H<sub>2</sub>S include sewage, landfills, and geothermal fields near the Tijuana River Valley
- OEHHA is responsible for developing RELs — reference levels and thresholds for acute and chronic exposure to toxic chemicals including H<sub>2</sub>S
- Current acute and chronic RELs for H<sub>2</sub>S were adopted in 1999; OEHHA is evaluating whether an update is warranted
- Process for updating RELs requires evaluation and analysis of newly available scientific data, community engagement, and public comment; a multi-year process
- OEHHA is conducting assessments to determine if an update to the RELs is appropriate and feasible given current data

**CalRecycle:** Katrina Leni-Konig (Deputy Director, CalRecycle) provided an update:

- Waste tire management: partnered with Urban Corps of San Diego County to remove and dispose of approximately 2,700 illegally dumped tires from border regional state parks, in collaboration with California State Parks
- Imperial County Tire Amnesty Grant Program: \$90,000 granted to support public tire recycling events; approximately 15,000 tires targeted with 3,670 already collected
- Inspection and enforcement: 943 inspections conducted in San Diego and Imperial Counties; 18 violations identified, all resolved
- CalRecycle collaborated with RARX (Mexico-based asphalt company) to explore use of rubberized asphalt concrete and supported testing for a California pilot project
- Met with SMADS to advance circular economy initiatives and address waste tire issues under the MOU
- CalRecycle will be hosting a 2026 California Tire Workshop Series on June 9th, 11th, 23rd, and one additional date; inviting border region partners; Spanish interpretation available
- Noted CalRecycle's adoption of a Reuse Plan providing a strategic roadmap for a circular economy in California

- Highlighted SB 54 regulations adoption as a major milestone for plastics and packaging law

**Acting Chair Lyles (CalEPA):** Highlighted the Plastic Pollution Mitigation Fund (PPMF) as a \$5 billion investment over 10 years (\$500 million per year beginning July 2027), led by CalEPA in partnership with CNRA and the Strategic Growth Council. Called attention to the community input opportunity available at CalEPA's website ([CalEPA.ca.gov/PPMF](http://CalEPA.ca.gov/PPMF)), noting that especially border communities should provide input on how these funds can benefit communities experiencing plastic pollution in air and water. Welcomed feedback from the public and partners.

**USEPA Update on Tijuana River:** Laura Ebbert provided updates on federal investment and coordination:

Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) — two major projects currently funded:

- Rehabilitation of Pump Station 1B in Tijuana: critical project to divert flows from the river channel into appropriate treatment; kicked off April 27, 2026 with an estimated 18-month timeline
- Tijuana River Gates Project: rehabilitation of over 37,000 feet of collection pipeline in Tijuana; more than half complete; will prevent 5 million gallons per day of raw sewage from entering the river channel; expected completion this fall

Effluent Relocation Project:

- Will divert 10 million gallons per day of treated wastewater from Aguas del Río and La Morita treatment plants to a discharge point upstream of Rodriguez Reservoir, keeping treated effluent entirely out of the Tijuana River
- Phase 1 began with a \$16 million U.S. dollar commitment from Mexico
- Phase 2 will begin once funding is confirmed on both sides and environmental assessments are complete
- EPA published a Finding of No Significant Impact on April 27 for a 30-day public comment period

MOU and Minute 333:

- EPA leadership signed an MOU with SEMARNAT in Mexico on July 24, 2025
- Five months later, USIBWC and its Mexican counterpart CILA signed Minute 333, solidifying timelines from the MOU and making additional commitments to improve wastewater infrastructure comprehensively (100% solution)
- Since the MOU, Mexico has committed \$59 million U.S. dollars to different Minute 328 projects, exceeding the required \$46 million

Air Quality Contributions from USEPA:

- Provided funding for 6 lower-cost H2S sensors (later determined insufficient by APCD)
- Provided resources to purchase and operate more robust H2S monitoring equipment for timely community alerts

- Coordinated with SDAPCD in designing the H2S monitoring network
- Provided some funding for air purifiers in 2024; additional funding planned for later this year
- Noted: Virtual San Diego-Tijuana Air Quality Task Force meeting scheduled for May 20th from 11 AM to 12:30 PM Pacific

**CalOES:** Noted the State Warning Center and State Threat Assessment Center continue to track and monitor all Tijuana River spills and transboundary flows, notifying U.S. State consulates and coordinating with the National Response Center and USIBWC.

**Acting Chair Lyles — Summary:** Noted investments including the \$4.7 million trash boom (capturing approximately 1,500 tons this season, approximately double last year), approximately \$270 million in CARB funding for residential electrification, and the \$50 million Proposition 4 funding authorization for water quality infrastructure. Emphasized the state is not responsible for transboundary flows but is committed to supporting mitigation efforts and finding additional funding. Highlighted the cross-border nature of the H2S issue — Baja California communities are also experiencing the impacts, and a cross-border solution is necessary. Noted CalEPA is providing technical assistance to SMADS on H2S education and information.

Public Comment: None.

### **10. Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items – Chair Designee Maurice Lyles, Deputy Secretary, California Secretary for Environmental Protection**

Acting Chair Lyles proposed a fall 2026 timeframe for the next meeting. The next meeting will be held in Imperial County, continuing the practice of alternating between San Diego County and Imperial County.

Acting Chair Lyles proposed that council and staff establish a working group to identify what can be collectively accomplished through the council — environmental issues, economic issues, agricultural issues, and binational partnership with Mexico. He asked the working group to commit time between now and the fall meeting and report back to the council and the public with 2 or more collective action items.

Council Member Ebbert expressed support for the working group concept, noting interest in thinking about how to develop recommendations on projects for the council.

CalEPA staff directed to work with council members to establish a cross-agency working group to identify 2 or more collective priority actions for report-back at the fall BRC meeting.

### **11. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda – Chair Designee Maurice Lyles, Deputy Secretary, California Secretary for Environmental Protection**

Acting Chair Lyles opened the floor for public comment on items not on the agenda.

Public Comment: None.

Acting Chair Lyles noted for the record: *"The Council may not discuss or take action on any matter raised during the Public Comment section that is not included on this agenda, except whether to decide to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting."*

Council Member Dorantes (CalOES) noted that April was Earthquake Preparedness Month and encouraged all attendees and members of the public to download the MyShake app, which provides up to 30 seconds of advance notification for seismic events. She noted this is particularly relevant for FIFA World Cup 2026 and Olympics preparedness planning.

## **12. Adjournment**

Acting Chair Lyles adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m. PST.