

California Mexico Border Relations Council

2025 Annual Report

A Summary of Activities Undertaken in 2025

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Council Background

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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.

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 nine state entities, with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 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' page follows this one)

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Executive Summary

Trade

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) serves as California's lead entity for job creation and economic development. Within GO-Biz, the International Affairs and Trade team advances these efforts by promoting exports, attracting foreign investment, and strengthening the state's global partnerships. Engagement with Mexico remains central to this work, reflecting the depth and strategic importance of one of California's most significant economic relationships.

California further supports this relationship through its Trade and Services Desk (Desk) in Mexico City, operated in partnership with the University of California's Casa de la Universidad de California. The Desk helps GO-Biz facilitate two-way trade and investment, strengthens bilateral ties, and serves as a resource for California state officials to support intergovernmental collaboration and deepen engagement with Mexico.

Beginning in 2025, the United States entered a unique trade environment shaped by evolving federal priorities and tariff policies—dynamics that remain ongoing. Against this backdrop, GO-Biz's efforts underscore the importance of sustained collaboration and resilient supply chains across the California–Mexico corridor. GO-Biz continues to support businesses and strengthen institutional connections that promote stability, continuity, and shared economic growth.

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 engaged 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 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.

Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) continues to strengthen engagement and collaboration with border counterparts on a wide range of agricultural priorities. Multiple divisions within the Department maintain close, ongoing coordination with Mexico on shared border issues, including the Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Division, the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division, the Animal Health and Food Safety Division, and the Executive Office.

Energy

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) maintains strong partnerships with Mexico, recognizing the critical importance of cross-border cooperation in safeguarding communities on both sides of the border. In 2025, this collaboration included coordinated wildfire response in Los Angeles County with Mexican firefighting personnel and active monitoring of environmental, maritime, and public safety incidents along the border. Cal OES also participated in information-sharing forums, binational emergency communications working groups, and community outreach through the Mexican Consulate, while continuing to track transboundary wastewater flows from the Tijuana River and notifying U.S. stakeholders. And ahead of major upcoming events, Cal OES participated in a multi-agency emergency exercise in Los Angeles alongside over 20 consulates, including Mexico, to strengthen coordination and communication.

Transportation

Caltrans District 11 (D11) encompasses the entire border region 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. D11's efforts focus on improving border infrastructure, increasing the efficiency of cross-border movements, and reducing environmental impacts. In 2025, D11 made significant progress in addressing congestion, enhancing mobility, and supporting economic growth through various projects and initiatives.

Last year, in 2025, California's ports of entry processed over 103.4 million border crossings with 18.6 million pedestrians, 31.1 million personal vehicles, and 1.5 million commercial trucks, underscoring the significant role the region plays in the nation's trade economy. All of the traditional ports of entry experienced growth in pedestrian traffic compared to 2024 crossings. The San Ysidro and Otay Mesa Ports of Entry ranked first and fourth,

respectively, on the U.S. Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics 2025 Port Ranking list for busiest ports of entry.

To alleviate the impacts of congestion, Caltrans, alongside federal agencies like U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP), has explored innovative technological solutions. This includes the Border Wait Time System, which provides real-time information on border wait times, and the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry (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.

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. The 2028 California-Baja California Border Master Plan Update focusing on creating a seamless, accessible, and sustainable transportation network that promotes economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship, ultimately improving the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors to the California-Baja California border region. 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 zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) charging stations.

Safety

Efforts to ensure border safety remain a top priority, primarily through the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program and the California Maritime Security Program. Operation Stonegarden resulted in significant joint operational partnerships, narcotic seizures, arrests, emergency management, 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

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Mexican firefighting personnel and active monitoring of environmental, maritime, and public safety incidents along the border. Cal OES also participated in information-sharing forums, binational emergency communications working groups, and community outreach through the Mexican Consulate, while continuing to track transboundary wastewater flows from the Tijuana River and notifying U.S. stakeholders. And ahead of major upcoming events, Cal OES participated in a multi-agency emergency exercise in Los Angeles alongside over 20 consulates, including Mexico, to strengthen coordination and communication.

Trade

Mexico continues to be California's primary export destination and is now its largest trade partner overall. California accounts for roughly 10% of all U.S. exports to Mexico – more than \$34.91 billion in 2025. Key exports from California to Mexico include computer and electronic goods, transportation equipment, non-electrical machinery, electrical products, and food-related items. Moreover, California imported \$61.56 billion worth of goods from Mexico, making the country California's third largest import partner. Significant imports from Mexico (\$505.9 billion) include computer and electronic items, transportation equipment, agricultural products, electrical goods, appliances, and various manufactured commodities.

Foreign Investment

Mexico is California's 13th-largest source of foreign investment. Mexican-owned companies support 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 supports Mexican businesses expanding into California by offering regulatory and permitting guidance, incentive navigation, and connections to local partners.

International Engagement

In 2025, California strengthened its relationship with Mexico through a series of targeted virtual and in-person engagements across diplomatic, economic, and policy channels. In February, GO-Biz led an advanced manufacturing delegation to Monterrey and hosted a California Pavilion at Expo Manufactura to promote sustainable advanced manufacturing and strengthen industry ties. GO-Biz also participated in the SelectUSA Conference in

Mexico City, engaging with approximately 200 Mexican companies and promoting California as a destination for business investment.

In March, the GO-Biz Director met with Baja California's Secretary of Economy & Innovation to advance Cali-Baja collaboration, with a focus on supply chain integration, potential trade-focused MOUs, and alignment on upcoming engagements. That same month, GO-Biz leadership also joined California and Sonoran counterparts to advance dialogue on clean energy collaboration and regional economic integration, highlighting shared opportunities in advanced manufacturing and climate innovation.

In April, Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis held a bilateral discussion with Mexico's Consul General in Sacramento to reaffirm California's commitment to strong cross-border ties amid evolving federal trade and immigration policies, emphasizing economic stability, community support, and continued cooperation.

In May, GO-Biz participated in a legislative hearing before the Select Committee on California-Mexico Cooperation and Dialogue to brief new members on California's binational engagement efforts. GO-Biz highlighted its role in trade promotion, investment attraction, and cross-border partnership development.

In August, the GO-Biz ZEV team contributed to the California-Baja California Regional Sustainable Development Summit, supporting binational dialogue on zero-emission mobility and identifying opportunities for collaboration in clean transportation.

In September, GO-Biz approved funding through the Southwest Border Regional Commission, which awarded \$3 million through its Economic and Infrastructure Development Grant Program. These investments support infrastructure and workforce development and are designed to deliver long-term economic impact in economically distressed communities, aligned with California Jobs First priorities.

In November, GO-Biz participated in the 4th USMCA SME Dialogue & B2B Matchmaking – Special Edition, engaging regional partners and contributing to discussions aimed at capturing small and medium sized business input to inform the 2026 USMCA review.

Business, Consumer Services, and Housing

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 engaged with counterparts across the border to improve licensing and consumer services, engaged with the community to safeguard civil rights, and invested in communities along the border to provide safe and stable homes.

Providing Safe and Stable Homes

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) makes strategic investments to provide stable, safe, affordable homes for people of California. In 2025, HCD:

- Invested over \$262 million in Imperial and San Diego counties across various state and federal programs, including the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program, Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, Permanent Local Housing Allocation Program, Infill Infrastructure Grant, and Homekey.
- Provided in-person multi-lingual technical assistance to customers in Imperial County through the Codes and Standards' Registration and Titling program. This assistance included completing mobile home and manufactured home registration and titling forms and processing applications.

Safeguarding Civil Rights

The Civil Rights Department (CRD) protects the people of California from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and hate violence. In San Diego and Imperial counties in 2025, CRD:

- Investigated 474 complaints of civil rights violations, of which 103 cases were settled, securing a total of \$1,265,322 and other types of relief for complainants.
- Provided know-your-rights materials in English and Spanish to more than 5,500 attendees at eight community events.
- Served as a panelist during Labor Rights Week, hosted by the Mexican Consulate, providing attendees with an overview of the employment laws CRD enforces.
- Delivered a presentation to the Brawley Chamber of Commerce on CRD's [Welcome In program](#), which helps businesses foster an inclusive environment free of hate and discrimination through legal training, technical assistance, and resource-sharing.
- Trained more than 100 people on civil rights topics at standing [monthly webinars](#), covering issues related to employment and housing discrimination.

Protecting Consumers

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 2025, DCA boards and bureaus engaged in the following collaborative initiatives with Mexico:

- The Medical Board of California continued its work supporting the Licensed Physicians from Mexico Pilot Program (LPMPP), a successful program designed to improve access to healthcare in underserved communities. The LPMPP is a California initiative that allows 30 licensed physicians from Mexico to practice in designated clinics under restricted, supervised conditions for an initial three-year period. [AB 2860](#) (Chapter 246, Statutes of 2024) and [AB 2864](#) (Chapter 247, Statutes of 2024) expanded and extended this successful program. In 2025, 29 physicians practice across four clinics throughout the state, spanning Monterey, Tulare, San Benito, Orange, and Los Angeles counties. Due to its success, the pilot program transitioned into the new Licensed Physicians from Mexico program, which is no longer considered a pilot. In October, the first application period opened and received 95 new applications.

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. In 2025, DFPI:

- Targeted Outreach Team conducted scam prevention workshops, financial education presentations, and anti-fraud webinars across various communities. This initiative included 14 events in collaboration with the Mexican consulates in Fresno, Sacramento, and San Francisco.
- Partnered with the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) and state legislative offices to host four Senior Scam Stopper events in San Diego County.
- Awarded CalMoneySmart grant program grants of up to \$200,000 per year to nonprofit organizations that provide free financial education and empowerment programs for unbanked and underbanked Californians. Two nonprofits—Logan Heights Community Development Corporation and Community Financial Resources—received grants to deliver services and programs in San Diego and Imperial Counties.
- Awarded \$7.25 million in [The Student Loan Empowerment \(SLE\) Project](#) grants to community-based organizations and legal aid groups to provide free education, case management, and assistance with student loan issues. In 2025, nine organizations were awarded grants in Imperial and San Diego Counties.

Environmental Protection

Air Quality

As a part of the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) overall mission of protecting public health, welfare, and ecological resources through the effective reduction of air pollutants, CARB has continued its work in the border region to improve air quality in 2025. CARB furthered this goal through core programmatic functions including the [California Climate Investments](#) (CCI), Assembly Bill (AB) 617 [Community Air Protection Program](#) (CAPP), air quality research and planning, air quality monitoring, support through the Truck Regulation Implementation Group (TRIG) in the border region for the transition to medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles, and enforcement actions and settlements to reduce harmful emissions. Community-driven binational efforts, by CARB and our Californian and Mexican community partners, are also ongoing to address and ameliorate exposure to harmful air emissions in a region with shared, international air basins. CARB continues to strengthen relationships with its Mexican counterparts to improve air quality outcomes. These efforts are described in Appendix A: Additional Air Quality Efforts of this annual report. CARB's [California-Mexico border-specific webpage](#) provides information more broadly on border activities and is updated regularly.

In 2025, the evolving air pollution crisis at the Tijuana River Valley required immediate and sustained action. Since 2019, California has allocated approximately \$38 million for Tijuana River water quality improvement. Given the transboundary nature of wastewater discharges, federal agencies play a key role in advancing binational infrastructure solutions, including coordination with Mexico. California continues to work in partnership with federal agencies and local partners, including the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) to support efforts that improve water and air quality for communities affected by transboundary pollution. CARB began the process in 2025 of creating a new [webpage](#) to provide air quality resources related to Tijuana River Valley, including appropriate contacts at SDAPCD and County of San Diego. Appendix A: 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 2025, approximately \$1.17 billion in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) have been implemented in border region projects, with \$831.0 million (or 71%) 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 6,157 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e). CARB outreach on GGRF projects, including 322 events across all programs in the border region, have reached

about 15,883 participants. The majority of the outreach efforts have occurred through the Community Air Protection Program and Low Carbon Transportation Program.

Throughout 2025 CARB continued to address community air pollution issues across the border region through CAPP. Under Assembly Bill 617 (Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017), the Program's focus is to reduce exposure in communities most impacted by air pollution. CARB works with three local air districts, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the SDAPCD, and Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) to implement Community Emission Reduction Programs (CERPs) for the five AB 617 communities in the border region:

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

CARB and the districts actively promote a community-focused and equity-centered approach, working with community members, community-based organizations, tribes, environmental justice organizations, state and local governments, regulated industries, and other key stakeholders to catalyze new partnerships and deepen existing relationships.

In 2025, CAPP supported the following:

[Eastern Coachella Valley](#): In June 2025, the Diesel Mobile Sources Workshop brought community members together to explore how diesel emissions shape the air we breathe and our collective health, while spotlighting state and regional solutions. The 2nd Annual AB 617 All Community Steering Committee (CSC) Event followed in October, uniting 100 community leaders and members from all six SCAQMD communities for a vibrant day of collaboration, idea-sharing, and connection. Attendees dove into discussions about the latest air quality challenges, received updates on local air monitoring, emission-reduction projects, new funding opportunities, and learned about recent legislative changes. ECV residents shared their insights on which neighborhood streets could benefit from restricted truck access. The ECV community also developed an instructional video to help community members with easy-to-understand materials on truck traffic impacts, mobile air monitoring, and tips for identifying high truck traffic street locations.

Additionally, CARB staff led the coordination of a fumigant study to address community concerns about pesticide exposure. The ECV Monitoring Group managed the study, which

included representatives from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, and SCAQMD. The three-month pesticides sampling study was conducted at three sites between November 2022 and February 2023. The winter monitoring initiative collected 24-hour air samples over 13 weeks. While some samples detected pesticides, no exceedances were found. The results were presented to the CSC in January 2025.

[As of June 2025](#), the Eastern Coachella Valley's CERP made significant progress on its 74 total strategies, which includes 18% completed, 23% nearing completion, and 59% underway. Over \$37.1 million in incentive funding has been allocated to mobile source projects, resulting in annual reductions of 146 tons of oxides of nitrogen (Nox), 11.3 tons of diesel particulate matter (PM), and 16.9 tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Air filtration units were delivered to 539 households in ECV. Ongoing efforts in the area include establishing paved road agreements, addressing illegal dumping, and expanding tree planting with local partners.

North Imperial Phase 1 (Imperial North-End): In June 2025, CARB approved the [Imperial County North End Phase I Community Emission Reduction Program \(CERP\) Plan](#), which focuses on air quality mitigation efforts in the cities of Brawley, Westmorland, and Calipatria. The CERP identifies community-identified strategies and actions to address Imperial North End top air quality impacts associated with transportation corridors, major goods movements, industry, agricultural burning and equipment use, off roading, fugitive dust from unpaved roads, heavy-duty truck traffic and idling, and the Salton Sea. Imperial North-End CERP includes 25 strategies to reduce emissions to improve local air quality.

Calexico, El Centro, Heber (Imperial Corridor): AB 617 clean air efforts in the border region of the Calexico, Heber, El Centro community in Imperial County began in 2019, the first year of CERP development. Strategies to reduce emissions and exposure to air pollutants resulted in a variety of community projects. As of September 2025, a total of 35 projects have been completed and 16 projects are in progress, for a total of 51 projects in the border region using AB 617 CAP incentive funds. These AB 617 projects include four school bus replacement projects, seven EV infrastructure projects, 13 paving projects, 10 urban greening projects, and 17 school air filtration projects.

Portside Environmental Justice Neighborhoods (Portside): The Portside Community Steering Committee (CSC) is committed to improving air quality in the communities of Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, and West National City in San Diego through their [Portside CERP](#). Portside CSC members worked on air quality priorities, including emission reductions from waterfront activities, such as the port, navy, and

shipyard, as well as freight, rail, and industry, which contribute to high cumulative air pollution. SCAPCD conducted outreach to inform City of San Diego community members about urban greening project funding availability as a means to reduce air quality pollution. In 2025, 307 trees were planted in the Portside Area, including Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, Grant Hill, and Stockton, to improve air quality.

San Diego International Border Community (IBC, San Ysidro-Otay Mesa):

The International Border Community, consisting of the cities of San Ysidro and Otay Mesa, within the SDAPCD, is in its second year of CERP implementation. In 2025, CERP accomplishments included the implementation of an afterhours complaint program to enhance air quality investigations by significantly increasing the response time to less than 24 hours. Additionally, the CAPP distributed 10,000 air purifiers and filters through the Air Improvement Relief Effort (AIRE) program to support families in the Tijuana River Valley affected by hydrogen sulfide odors. Finally, as of January 2025, 1,002 trees were planted in San Ysidro, Otay-Mesa West, and Nestor.

Under EPA's Border Program, the SDAPCD serves as the Co-Chair for the San Diego-Tijuana Air Quality Task Force, while the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District 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 air quality in the border region, and this collaboration can lead to binational coordination of actions in San Diego and Imperial. CARB continued to participate in this process through 2025 and shared updates on border efforts where applicable. Additional activities conducted in the San Diego and Imperial border regions in 2025 are described further in Appendix A: Additional Air Quality Efforts.

CARB administers the [Community Air Grants \(CAGs\)](#) program, which is a part of the California Climate Investments Program. The CAGs are mandated by AB 617. This grant program supports the participation of community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations and California Native American Tribes in the [Community Air Protection Program](#). CAGs are designed to build the capacity of grantees to collaborate with state and local governments in identifying, evaluating, and reducing air pollution exposures to harmful emissions within their communities.

During 2025, five CAG projects as part of [Cycle 4](#) and [Cycle 5](#), totaling \$1.6 million in funding, were implemented in the border region that include the following:

- Pala Band of Mission Indians (Pala Tribe), \$284,553 – This project focused on reducing emissions and improving air quality on the Reservation by developing a local community emissions reduction plan (L-CERP). The Tribe purchased and

installed three Tempest WeatherFlow weather stations to monitor precipitation, solar radiation, wind speed and direction, temperature, pressure, and humidity.

- United for Justice, \$100,000 – This technical project monitored air quality and empower residents in the Salton Sea Basin communities of Imperial County. It deployed three air quality (AQ Mesh monitors, two on the East Shores and one on the West Shores) to track real-time data on key pollutants, including PM1, PM2.5, PM10, ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), and meteorological conditions.
- United for Justice, \$500,000 – This technical project is planting 82 trees and installing a new irrigation system to support tree growth in the communities of Bombay Beach. United for Justice (UFJ) is establishing the first tree canopy in the Salton Sea. UFJ will use 50 IQ Air Health ProPlus XE purifiers to help community members understand how air quality monitoring data connects to local indoor air quality issues and promote participation in future local air quality planning. The UFJ project is deploying three additional AQ Mesh Pods, one in the Desert Shores community and two in Salton City, to monitor PM1, PM2.5, PM10, O3, NO2, CO, H2S, SO2, and meteorological parameters.
- Coalition for Clean Air (CCA), \$291,685 – This educational project is conducting three in-person 2.5-day “All About Air Quality” training bootcamps for community-based organization (CBO) staff and community members (30 participants per training) to help them engage in air quality issues and decisions that affect their communities. CCA is holding trainings in Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Diego, working with at least one and up to three local CBOs to plan each session.
- Greenaction for Environmental Justice and Health \$500,000 – This technical project is expanding the Bayview Hunters Point and Imperial Valley IVAN Task Forces in Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco, and on the Quechan Indian Tribe reservation in Winterhaven. Greenaction is installing four new PM monitors on the Quechan Tribe’s reservation and conducting at least 40 hours of air monitoring per year to identify known and suspected air pollution hotspots. Greenaction is providing technical training for community residents to understand and interpret data from air quality monitors.

CARB continued efforts in 2025 to address environmental justice and equity concerns in border communities. The border region includes a large concentration of California Native

American Tribes. CARB thus met with tribes in San Diego County to better understand some of the challenges with reducing emissions and addressing air quality concerns, highlighted further in Appendix B.

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 2025, its efforts focused on deepening relationships with community-based organizations, Tribal Nations, and frontline communities, sharing scientific tools in accessible ways, and uplifting community and Indigenous knowledge to shape how it understands and responds to environmental health challenges. Summary of Mexico Border Activities:

- [Community Engagement and Environmental Health Education](#)
- [CalEnviroScreen 5.0 Update and DAC Designations](#)
- [CalHeatScore Extreme Heat](#)
- [Fish Consumption Advisories](#)
- [Pesticide Illnesses Education](#)
- [Climate Indicators](#)

Centering Equity, Community Knowledge, and Tribal Voices

In 2025, OEHHA continued advancing efforts to center equity, community knowledge, and Tribal perspectives in environmental health science. As part of this work, OEHHA began establishing the Office of Environmental Health Education, Community Engagement, and Cumulative Impacts Science (OECC) to strengthen how the agency integrates community engagement and cumulative impacts science across its programs. Through these efforts, OEHHA is working to ensure that its scientific work reflects the lived realities of communities most impacted by environmental hazards, including Tribal Nations and Spanish-speaking border communities, and contributes to more equitable environmental health protections across California.

Mapping Pollution

OEHHA continued advancing the development of CalEnviroScreen 5.0, the next update of California’s environmental justice screening tool used to identify communities burdened by multiple sources of pollution and vulnerability. Throughout 2025, OEHHA prepared the draft release of CalEnviroScreen 5.0, which launched in early 2026 with a public comment period to gather feedback from communities, Tribes, and the public.

OEHHA continues to strengthen the tool and ensure it reflects environmental realities experienced by communities across California. CalEnviroScreen also continues to support

CalEPA's designation of disadvantaged communities (DACs) under SB 535, helping ensure that climate investments and environmental programs reach communities most impacted by pollution and climate change.

Extreme Heat and Community Engagement: CalHeatScore

In 2025, OEHHA continued advancing the California Communities Extreme Heat Scoring System (CalHeatScore), a statewide tool designed to translate weather, environmental, and health data into easy-to-understand heat risk alerts. CalHeatScore helps communities prepare for extreme heat events and reduce heat-related illness, particularly among populations most vulnerable to heat exposure such as older adults, children, and outdoor workers.

To ensure the tool reflects community realities, OEHHA engaged with community and Tribes to discuss how extreme heat impacts their communities, share resilience strategies, and identify ways CalHeatScore could better support preparedness and decision-making that can have relevant impacts in communities near the border. These discussions help inform improvements to the tool and guide future outreach.

Fish Consumption Advisories Respecting Cultural Practices

OEHHA's fish consumption advisories provide science-based guidance that helps communities make informed choices about eating fish from California water bodies. In 2025, OEHHA developed or updated advisories for several water bodies across California, continuing efforts to ensure that advisories reflect current data and are accessible to communities that rely on fish for food, culture, and subsistence. OEHHA released an advisory for [Hodges Reservoir](#) in San Diego County.

OEHHA is also collaborating with state partners to develop a consumption application, designed to improve access to advisory information for Tribal communities and individuals who rely on fish as an important cultural and subsistence resource.

Pesticide Exposure and Community Education

OEHHA continues working with Tribes, community partners, and health professionals to improve awareness of pesticide-related health impacts and prevention strategies. Through collaboration with Tribal working groups, OEHHA developed a story map material designed to reflect Tribal lifeways, exposure pathways, and community priorities. These efforts aim to ensure that pesticide-related health information is accessible, culturally relevant, and useful for clinicians, Tribal environmental staff, and community members.

Climate Indicators and Tribal Climate Knowledge

OEHHA continues working with California Tribes to expand Tribal perspectives in the Indicators of Climate Change in California report. In 2025, OEHHA collaborated with Tribal

partners to document the unique climate impacts experienced by Tribal communities and highlight community-driven resilience strategies.

This work includes partnerships with multiple Tribes and the continued development of the “California Tribes and Climate Change: Voices from the Frontlines” video series, which uplifts Tribal perspectives on climate impacts and adaptation efforts.

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 2025 to address pollution from both nonpoint and point sources in transboundary rivers. The Regional Boards continue to work cooperatively with EPA, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and Mexico to address pollution sources. 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.

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:

- Nonpoint sources, mainly agriculture, by implementing total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and programs for agricultural runoff (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program),
- Point sources, mainly wastewater treatment plants (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program), and
- Conducting 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.

Through in-person, bimonthly Binational Technical Committee (BTC) meetings, the Colorado River Basin Water Board collaborated with representatives from EPA, North American Development Bank, United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), Comisión Internacional de Límites del Agua, Comisión Estatal de Agua, Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Mexicali (CESPM), Comisión Nacional del Agua, and the Imperial County Public Health Department to address New River pollution originating from Mexicali. Topics of discussion included the state of sewage infrastructure in Mexicali, discharges into New River, and measures to prevent adverse

water quality impacts to New River. Meetings also included a tour of key wastewater treatment and pumping facilities to showcase progress made towards the rehabilitation of Mexicali's sewer infrastructure.

On January 17, 2025, a request to discharge treated effluent from the City of Calexico's Water Pollution Control Plant to a new additional outfall point was approved. The new discharge point, Outfall 002, is located immediately downstream of the New River Improvement Project's diversion structure pushup weir and discharges to the New River. The purpose of the discharge is to test three pumps that are a part of the New River Improvement Project, and discharge continuously after the pumps have been tested and the components of the New River Improvement Project are fully operational. The Colorado River Basin Water Board updated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit CA7000009, to include the new Outfall 002 discharge point. The revised permit was adopted at a Board Meeting on April 1, 2025.



Photo.Credit;Colorado.River.Basin.Regional.Water.Board

Photo.caption;Construction.of.the.New.River.Improvement.Project.began.in.November. 8689; Since.then?construction.of.the.trash.screen-diversion.structure?a.68_inch.bypass pipe?and.the.pumping.station.for.the.pump.back.system.have.been.completed.or.is.nearing. completion; Members.of.the.Colorado.River.Basin.Regional.Water.Board?staff.and.other. interested.parties.participated.in.a.tour.of.the.project.after.its.March.8689Board.Meeting;

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 9)

Addressing transboundary pollution in the Tijuana River remains a top priority for the San Diego Water Board. Transboundary flows of untreated domestic and industrial wastewater from Mexico continue to pose a severe risk to public health, require the closure of the region's South Bay beaches, and degrade critical estuarine and coastal ecosystems. These impacts fall disproportionately on disadvantaged communities, underscoring the Board's commitment to advancing environmental justice and protecting water quality in the affected communities.

In February 2025, the San Diego Water Board issued Investigative Order No. R9-2025-0022 to the United States section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The investigative order required USIBWC to submit technical information related to multi-day spill events at the Hollister Street Pump Station and at the Goat Canyon and Smuggler's Gulch canyon collectors – facilities regulated under USIBWC's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP).

On March 13, 2025, EPA accepted the Lower Tijuana River Indicator Bacteria and Trash Advance Restoration Plan (ARP), adopted by the San Diego Water Board in December 2024. The ARP identifies sources of trash and indicator bacteria pollution, establishes numeric targets to achieve water quality standards in the river, and identifies potential actions for pollution control in its implementation plan.

In May 2025, USIBWC announced a planned 10 million gallon per day (MGD) accelerated incremental expansion of the SBIWTP from 25 MGD to 35 MGD, with a target start date of August 28, 2025. On August 27, 2025, the San Diego Water Board adopted a Cease-and-Desist Order No. R9-2025-0139, which established interim effluent limitations for USIBWC's 35 MGD of blended advanced primary- and secondary-treated effluent, established remedial and preventative actions for USIBWC to implement at the SBIWTP, and required the submittal of documents related to the design, operation, and maintenance under the accelerated incremental expansion.¹

The San Diego Water Board Monitoring Assessment & Research Unit conducted stream bioassessment at two sites in the upper Tijuana River watershed in 2025. Upper watershed bioassessment results have historically demonstrated an unimpaired biological community, with strong California Stream Condition Index scores.² The record of strong stream bioassessment results from the upper Tijuana River watershed contrast with water quality conditions in the lower Tijuana River, which has 31 listed impairments in the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies.³ This underscores the ARP's

finding that water quality impairments in the lower Tijuana River are driven by discharges of untreated domestic and industrial wastewater in Tijuana and Tecate.

Throughout 2025, San Diego Water Board staff continued to coordinate with local, state, and federal stakeholders on emerging water quality issues in the San Diego–Tijuana border region. Through the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee, San Diego Water Board staff promoted interagency collaboration on the Saturn Boulevard “hotspot”, Tijuana River Trash Boom, Proposition 4 funding, Tijuana River Tidal Restoration Program, and Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project.

¹ In April 2026 the San Diego Water Board amended USIBWC’s NPDES permit to authorize the treatment of an additional 10 MGD at the SBIWTP.⁶

² Upper watershed bioassessment results for 2025 were not available at the time this report was drafted.

³ According to the 2024 California Integrated Report, the lower Tijuana River, downstream of the international border, is listed for the following impairments on the CWA Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies: Trash, Solids, Eutrophic, Pesticides, Ammonia as Nitrogen, Surfactants (MBAS), Total Nitrogen as N, Benthic Community Effects, Synthetic Organics, Sedimentation/Siltation, Trace Elements, Low Dissolved Oxygen, Malathion, Cadmium, Diazinon, Dichlorvos, Dissolved Oxygen, Phosphorus, Selenium, Toxicity, Turbidity, Bifenthrin, Ammonia (Unionized), Color, Chlorpyrifos, Nitrogen, Ammonia, Indicator Bacteria, Permethrin, Pyrethroids, and Cypermethrin.

The Steering Committee also reviewed public health assessments by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the County of San Diego and tracked sediment removal and habitat restoration projects at Smuggler’s Gulch, Goat Canyon, and the Brown Property.

Appendix

Waste Tires

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), a department within CalEPA, oversees the Tire Management Program, which is tasked with safely managing and developing end-use markets for more than 60 million waste tires generated each year in California. As part of its efforts, CalRecycle has used grant funds to clean up 6,370 waste tires (through the clean-up of illegally dumped tires and tire amnesty events) in the Border Region.

CalRecycle Border Tire Activities

The Border Region faces challenges with improperly managed waste tires. California is committed to supporting activities that address waste tire challenges in the Border Region. CalRecycle’s Five-Year Tire Plan outlines opportunities for work in the Border Region and can be found here: [Publication Summary](#). In 2025, 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 2025-26 in the California Border Field State Park. Urban Corps removed approximately 2,700 tires (Figures 1 and 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 local jurisdictions.
 - TA Grant award to Imperial County – Imperial County was awarded \$90,000 and will use the funds to collect an estimated 15,000 tires in the Border Region by holding tire amnesty events. Final numbers will not be available until October 2027, when the grant closes. As of the date of this report, a total of 3,670 tires have been collected.
 - There were no TCU grants awarded in 2025, as this program is offered every other year.

Figure 1

Urban Corps of San Diego, California, Border Field State Park Loading Tires When Cleaning up Tire Pile (October 2025)



Figure 2

Urban Corps of San Diego, California, Border Field State Park Cleaning up Tire Pile (October 2025)



Inspection and Enforcement

- In 2025, CalRecycle, in partnership with the California Highway Patrol, monitored and assessed the need for hauler checkpoints at commercial points of entry into California and in the surrounding areas.
- CalRecycle analyzed used and waste tire manifest data around the Southern California portion of the Border Region. Used and waste tire movement in California and used tires exported from California are tracked using CalRecycle's Waste Tire Manifest System (WTMS). The WTMS database has records for used tires manifested to specific business locations in Mexico, and to both the Commercial Ports of Exit at Otay Mesa in San Diego County, and Calexico Port of Exit in Imperial County. Initial estimates of WTMS manifest records collected in 2025 are within the same order of magnitude as reported imports by Mexico's federal Secretary of the Economy and aligned with the used tire annual import quota. Implementation of SB 1181 (Chapter 542, Statutes of 2022) authorized CalRecycle to transition to an electronic manifest tracking system that will assist in further analysis and improved tracking of manifested used and waste tires in the Border Region.

Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement

In carrying out its responsibilities under Senate Bill (SB) 83 (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2015), 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.

- On September 3, 2025, 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.
- November 12-13 and December 9-11, CalRecycle hosted the Annual Local Enforcement Agency/CalRecycle Technical Training Series. A series of technical training sessions on solid waste for CalRecycle staff and all local enforcement agencies (LEAs), including those in the Border Region, to provide more opportunities for interaction and information exchange.
- On December 8th, CalRecycle participated in a meeting with RARx, a Mexico-based asphalt company, to discuss the use of Rubberized Asphalt Concrete in Mexico. Additionally, the RARx product was tested as part of a pilot project in California to help demonstrate the product's performance, which should help support its use in both Mexico and California.
- In 2025 and beyond, CalRecycle hosts a Border Region monthly work group meeting to discuss how CalRecycle can help with solid waste issues in the Border Region.
- CalRecycle manages a contract that provides both verbal interpretation and written translation services. This increases accessibility for Spanish-speaking stakeholders to tire technical conferences, documents, workshops, and trainings.

Pesticides

Agriculture and Urban Surface Water Monitoring

As part of the continuous evaluation process, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) Surface Water Protection Program collects surface water samples twice per year at long-term monitoring sites in Imperial (agricultural) and San Diego (urban) counties. Monitoring locations include agricultural drainage ditches, urban storm drains, and receiving waters including New River, Alamo River, and Chollas Creek. Samples are analyzed for ~81 pesticides and results are evaluated for potential impacts to the environment. Location-specific water quality results are shared with stakeholders through annual updates to the DPR Surface Water Database (SURF).

Public Service Announcements for Farmworker Health and Safety

DPR partnered with Radio Bilingüe to broadcast 910 Spanish and Mixteco Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on their radio network covering Calexico, El Centro, Coachella,

Mecca, and Indio. These PSAs, which aired from 12/9/2024 to 2/23/25, included information on what fieldworkers and the community can do in case of pesticide exposure, pesticide safety tips for fieldworkers, labor rights, DPR's role, and how to report pesticide incidents. Additionally, DPR partnered with Lotus Media to stream digital radio spots targeting Imperial and Riverside Counties. The display ads/banner ads ran on mobile phones, desktops, and tablet devices appearing on sites commonly visited by target demographics. The ads were also delivered online via streaming platforms targeting Imperial, Calexico, and El Centro. These radio spots and ads aired 1,112,479 times from 2/01/2024 to 4/30/25.

Annual Farm Workers Appreciation Breakfast

On December 5, 2025, DPR staff, the Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner and staff, and representatives from EPA Region 9 participated in the Annual Farm Workers Appreciation Breakfast to provide information and resources on pesticide safety, reporting methods, and labor rights to thousands of field workers from Mexicali and the Calexico/El Centro area. This event is hosted by the California Employment Development Department to honor the thousands of farm workers working in Imperial County.

Toxics

CalEPA's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), through its San Diego Border Office, is responsible for tracking imported and exported hazardous wastes through its California/Mexico Border Program (Border Program). DTSC Border Program is authorized through the EPA Environmental Border Program (Border 2025 Program). This EPA Program – and its previous iterations – were created as a result of the La Paz Agreement, a binational agreement between the United States of America and the United Mexican States signed in the City of La Paz, Mexico, in 1983 by US President Ronald Reagan and Mexico President Miguel de la Madrid. The La Paz Agreement established cooperation on the protection and improvement of the environment in the border area, defined as being 100 km north and south from the line that divides both countries.

The DTSC Border Program comprises 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 EPA and 4. Co-chair and attendance in Border 2025 Program 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 2025, emphasis was placed on tracking imported and exported waste. In 2025, DTSC received 12 export notifications and 5 import notifications. Import notifications were reviewed and the receiving U.S. facility were checked to ensure 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 wastes in question.

The DTSC San Diego Border Office also conducts coordinated northbound border truck stop inspections with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) at the Otay Mesa, San Diego County and Calexico East, Imperial County Ports of Entry (See Figures 1). 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 Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Additionally, DTSC's Office of Criminal Investigations works alongside US CBP, CHP and Department of Transportation, to conduct random southbound border truck stop inspections.

Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) continues to strengthen engagement and collaboration with border counterparts on a wide range of agricultural priorities. Multiple divisions within the Department maintain close, ongoing coordination with Mexico on shared border issues, including the Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Division, the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division, the Animal Health and Food Safety Division, and the Executive Office.

CDFA remains committed to collaboration with border-state partners to address critical agricultural challenges and opportunities. The Department maintains strong engagement with the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) and formalized this partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2019, focused on advancing cooperation in trade, climate, and plant and animal health.

In 2025, CDFA joined the United States Department of Agriculture on a trade mission to Mexico City to expand market access, strengthen collaboration on plant and animal health, and support California businesses pursuing export opportunities. CDFA continues to prioritize international engagement with Mexican counterparts. Mexico remains California's

third-largest export destination for agricultural products, with exports valued at approximately \$1.9 billion.



CDFA Deputy Secretary Rachael O'Brien with Dr. Julio Berdegué, Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development, during USDA Agricultural Trade Mission to Mexico City (Dec. 8, 2025).

Collaborating on Plant Health

CDFA's Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Division works closely with border-state partners to address plant pests of mutual concern. Key collaboration occurs through the California-Baja

California Integration Group, which includes representatives from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the county agricultural commissioners' offices of Imperial and San Diego, and officials from Mexico's local, state, and federal governments.

As part of these efforts, Mexico will begin supplying CDFA with biological control organisms—specifically parasitoid wasps—to combat the invasive Pink Hibiscus Mealybug in Southern California. This pest affects a wide range of agricultural, horticultural, and native plant species. The introduction of biological controls supports the continued commercial viability of key California specialty crops, including grapes. CDFA also collaborates with international partners to facilitate the transport of sterile Mexican fruit fly pupae from Guatemala through Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to a production facility in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico—supporting regional pest suppression efforts.

Additionally, CDFA's Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division continues coordinated efforts with Mexico to address the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and the disease it vectors, Huanglongbing (HLB). This devastating disease poses a significant threat to citrus trees and fruit production. California and its border-state partners maintain aligned exclusion strategies and share critical surveillance data to limit the spread of ACP and HLB.

Protecting Animal Health and the Border: New World Screwworm

In 2025, significant binational coordination between Mexico and the United States intensified following the detection of New World screwworm (NWS) in Mexico. This highly destructive parasite can cause severe and often fatal damage to livestock, pets, wildlife, and, in rare cases, humans. CDFA's Animal Health and Food Safety Division works directly with USDA to safeguard the border from this invasive pest in collaboration with Mexican government.

The 2025 detections marked a concerning northward expansion of NWS, with cases identified closer to the U.S. border. In response, USDA, in collaboration with multiple government partners, launched the New World Screwworm Domestic Readiness and Response Policy Initiative. This effort focuses on containing the pest within Mexico, strengthening U.S. border protections, and ensuring rapid response readiness. CDFA continues to work closely with USDA and Mexican counterparts to enhance surveillance, strengthen preparedness, and protect animal health and agricultural resources along the border.

Natural Resources

Fish and Wildlife

Throughout 2025, 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)

This project is currently underway and will complete the planning and design to restore 70 acres of riparian habitat and construct a multi-use trail in Imperial Valley along the Alamo River within City of Holtville. In 2025, Bird Surveys, Soil Sampling, Vegetation Mapping, Native plant collection and preparation, and trail designs were completed. Data was compiled in various reports, and plants were stored for the future implementation project. River Partners is currently working on all permitting required for the project to

begin implementation and pursuing streamlined pathways for environmental review through CDFW's Cutting the Green Tape Program.

Work on this project, in conjunction with other active projects, has increased River Partners' capacity and engagement in Imperial Valley, by employing two locally based staff members for the restoration implementation team for this project, as well as two locally based science staff members for restoration planning. River Partners is also working with the only native plant nursery in the county to develop reliable supplies of locally sourced plants. Signage design contractors from the Imperial Valley Desert Museum in Ocotillo were engaged locally to develop interpretive materials for this project. Engaging the local community for public input illuminated specific interests for recreational amenities that was used to inform the trail design and restoration planning process.

[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 was completed in July 2025. 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.

[Phase 1 Finney-Ramer Unit Habitat Restoration Project](#)

(Grantee: River Partners)

This project continued in 2025 with replacement of 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. Project benefits and results are becoming even more apparent as habitat restoration proceeds. Plants in Field 1 and Field 2 are thriving and filling into the planting rows vigorously. Where salt cedar has been cleared previously, there is now recruitment of native plant species not seen there before the project.

[Shared Wetlands, Shared Stewardship: Coastal Wetland Recovery Across the Border](#)

Since 2020, CDFW, in coordination with the State of Baja California, Mexico (MX) has advanced recovery of the Light-footed Ridgeway's rail (rail) across coastal wetlands in the United States and Mexico. This species is critically endangered in both countries and is considered an umbrella and indicator species for these coastal wetlands.

Climate-driven stressors, including more frequent and intense king tide events, are degrading marsh habitat and contributing to the species' decline in the U.S. coastal

wetlands. The collaborations emphasized targeted rail censuses in Ensenada and San Quintín, MX, Comprehensive biodiversity surveys to track species composition and habitat conditions, and education and outreach to strengthen local stewardship and cross-border information sharing. CDFW's coordinated partnerships with governmental, academic, and nongovernmental partners to align methods and share data, working with the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable del Estado de Baja California, Terra Peninsular, CICESE, the San Diego Natural History Museum, the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, the University of Idaho, USGS, UABC, Pro Esteros, Conservación de Fauna del Noroeste A.C., and the Rocky Intertidal Monitoring Network.

Communications efforts were supported by the U.S. Department of State, which facilitated collaboration with InquireFirst, a U.S.-based nonprofit focused on strengthening journalism in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Through this partnership, project activities received coverage on Televisa Ensenada and other outlets in Baja California, including El Vigía, broadening public awareness of wetland conservation and species recovery efforts.

Field results underscore the ecological connectivity of border-region wetlands and ongoing climate-related change. Genetic analyses documented, for the first time, movement of Light-footed Ridgeway's rails between U.S. and Mexican coastal wetlands, confirming cross-border population linkages relevant to coordinated management. Surveys also observed a northward shift of warmer-water species historically found in southern Baja California into northern Baja California, including pufferfish and mangrove crabs, with pufferfish now recorded in Southern California. In parallel, the State of Baja California has designated a State Natural reserve at Punta Banda, Ensenada (Reserva Estatal Estero de Punta Banda), based on the findings of the partnership with CDFW, identifying the rail as a key species and prioritizing habitat protection and continued population monitoring, and initiated efforts to extend similar protections in San Quintín.

Looking ahead, the binational collaboration will continue joint monitoring, data sharing, and public communication to inform adaptive management, support expansion of protected status and management planning in additional priority coastal wetlands and maintain and strengthen partnership to enhance species recovery and climate resilience along the California-Baja California coast.





Cross-Border Gap Surveys for Endangered Butterfly Species

Butterfly species are particularly vulnerable to climate change because multiple life stages depend on specific ecological conditions, from host plant availability during the larval stage to nectar and foraging resources for adults. Conservation of these species can be especially challenging when their ranges extend across jurisdictions and international borders.

Since 2023, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has coordinated binational efforts with the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California (UABC), Ensenada, and Fauna del Noroeste, A.C., to conduct gap surveys for the Quino Checkerspot butterfly, Laguna Mountains skipper, and Hermes Copper butterfly in Baja California, Mexico. All three species are federally listed as threatened or endangered, and in 2025 the Quino Checkerspot butterfly was designated as a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act. These surveys are critical to determining whether the ranges of these species extend beyond the United States and to informing future cross-border conservation collaboration.

In 2026, partners confirmed a large metapopulation of the Quino Checkerspot butterfly in Valle de las Palmas, located between Tijuana and Tecate in Baja California, Mexico. Because this area has been identified for development, continued binational coordination will be important to support conservation of this habitat.

Surveys did not confirm additional locations for the Laguna Mountains skipper or Hermes Copper butterfly. In addition, follow-up visits to the most recent Hermes Copper butterfly observation site in 2026 did not detect any individuals. Field observations suggest that the species' host plant, spiny redberry, may have been affected by drought conditions.

Continued collaboration is essential to conserve sensitive species that are shared across borders and to strengthen coordinated, science-based conservation planning in the California-Baja California border region.



Border Field State Park and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

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

Key initiatives and significant occurrences from the TRNERR for the Calendar year of 2025 include:

Border Field State Park Resilience, Access, and Habitat Restoration Project (RAHR): CA State Parks continues advancing design and environmental review for a large project to realign the Park entrance road out of the river and ocean flood zone, and restore and reconnect wetland habitat impacted by the current unsustainable road alignment.

The [RAHR Project](#) is funded by CA State Parks deferred maintenance program with a supporting grant request to the U.S. National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund. During the 2025 calendar year we advanced the design through 30% and developed the project environmental impact report for CEQA compliance. We anticipate this construction project to go out to bid in Summer/Fall 2026, with construction occurring in the 2026 and 2027 calendar years.

Monument Mesa Improvements for Public Use and Education: CA State Parks is initiating design and environmental review to improve the public use facilities and interpretation and educational elements at Monument Mesa, located at the southwestern corner of the Tijuana River Valley. This day use area offers unparalleled views of the Tijuana River Valley, and the greater San Diego-Tijuana landscape and coastal environment, and serves as the connection point for Friendship Park, the location of the 1971 dedication of Border Field State Park by Presidential First Lady Pat Nixon. This unique location has served as a meeting place for the U.S., Mexico, and the Kumeyaay People throughout history. During the 2025 calendar year we organized materials from previous public engagement efforts, started early work on concept design alternatives, and initiated work order agreements with consultants to support the project. We also collaborated with the non-profit organization The Friends of International Friendship Park (FOIFP) and the CA State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to support design and future implementation of art and interpretive elements at this site funded through the SCC's Coastal Stories Grant Program and developed through a community driven effort lead by FOIFP.

Goat Canyon Sediment Basin Maintenance: CA State Parks again allocated approximately \$1.9 million toward the annual maintenance of the Goat Canyon Sediment Basins, allowing for the capture and removal of 18,000 cubic yards of sediment and over 50 tons of solid waste. Maintenance costs have risen significantly in the last 8 years and it is estimated that approximately \$6 million is needed annually to maintain the basins to design specification. CA State Parks retains a 50,000 cubic yard sediment stockpile on site within Boder Field State Park with an estimated cost of approximately \$5 million to haul off site and is advancing the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project in effort to reduce sediment management costs and increase efficiency with sediment management throughout the Tijuana River Valley.

Goat Canyon Trash Booms: NOAA's Marine Debris Program and construction funding from NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve Program awarded CA State Parks approximately \$320,000 for needed improvements to the Goat Canyon trash booms- a facility that captures solid waste in transboundary flows. This grant also funds the production of an educational video telling the story of solid waste pollution and efforts to control it in the Tijuana River Valley. Throughout 2025, the project team initiated work on the educational video and prepared purchasing documents for use in a publicly advertised competitive bidding process to purchase trash boom improvement elements. Various approaches to trash capture have been implemented by CA State Parks in Goat Canyon since 2011.

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

Ocean Corps Pilot Program: The Urban Corps of San Diego County received approximately \$500,000 through CA Ocean Protection Council's Ocean Conservation Corps. The Ocean Protection Council, in close partnership with the California Conservation Corps, worked with three local programs operating in coastal regions (CCC Fortuna District, Conservation Corps Long Beach, and Urban Corps of San Diego) to initiate the pilot effort for an Ocean Corps. This pilot program engages and provides workforce development for young people in coastal and ocean conservation, fosters environmental stewardship, and creates a future generation of ocean protectors through workforce training. With support of this program, the Urban Corps of San Diego County has partnered with TRNERR and is currently focused on several habitat restoration and enhancement projects in Border Field State Park and is gaining skills for next generation coastal management. We anticipate this effort to continue through the 2026 calendar year.

TRNERR System Wide Monitoring Program: The TRNERR's System Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) site-based monitoring data provides more than twenty-five years of standardized, quantitative measures to determine how conditions are changing in the short and long term. Abiotic parameters collected through this program include nutrients, temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed/direction, and precipitation. Starting in 2023, this monitoring program documented extended periods of significant water quality impairment in the Tijuana Estuary, which have continued into 2025. The cross-border pollution is causing significant habitat loss due to sedimentation, lack of tidal exchange, and low oxygen levels that are significantly

impacting fish, shellfish, and other wildlife across the Estuary, and these impacts are being documented through a variety of monitoring efforts.

Cultivating a Tri-National Marine Debris Leadership Coalition to Find Solutions to Complex Cross-Border Land-Based Marine Debris: In partnership with California Sea Grant, TRNERR was awarded three years of funding through the National Sea Grant Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions Competition. The project rests on two components: two new iterations of the Marine Debris Leadership Academy (MDLA), and the creation of the Marine Debris Leadership Coalition (MDLC).

The "tri-national" framing is deliberate. In the Tijuana River watershed, three nations meet — the United States, Mexico, and the Kumeyaay, whose ancestral lands predate and straddle the international border — and no lasting solution to land-based marine debris can come from only one of them.

To date, the project has convened Coalition Visioning Summits and delivered MDLA sessions that bring together Tribal, community, academic, government, and private-sector leaders, building on the pioneering Academy TRNERR launched in 2023. By the project's close, the MDLC will function as a sustained tri-national network for knowledge exchange, leadership development, and the kind of long-term collective action these challenges demand.

Binational Debris-Related Flooding Response Guide: Cross-Border Coordination in the San Diego–Tijuana Border Region. Coordinated by the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR), the Guide was developed to strengthen U.S.–Mexico coordination across all four phases of debris management: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Tailored to the San Diego–Tijuana border region, it provides a shared operational framework that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of local, state, and federal agencies, so that responses to debris-related flooding are faster and better aligned.

With support from the NOAA Marine Debris Program and the Office of Response and Restoration, the Guide adapts the national Marine Debris Emergency Response Guides to the environmental, institutional, and operational realities of the binational watershed. Its development drew on a broad collaborative process involving government agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, Tribal representatives, and community leaders from both sides of the border — ensuring that the final product reflects regional priorities and real operational needs.

In 2025, binational validation workshops were held in both the United States and Mexico, providing technical review and direct input from the people who will ultimately use the

Guide. Building on that milestone, additional funding is now supporting updates to the maps and technical content ahead of public release through the TRNERR website. Publication, however, is only part of the goal: a key objective is the Guide's adoption by the binational working groups established under IBWC/CILA Minute 320 of the 1944 Water Treaty, where it can serve as a lasting shared framework for preparedness and coordinated response to debris-related flooding.

Supporting Green Infrastructure in Baja California: Since 2020, the Tijuana Estuary Foundation (TEF), working in support of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR), has received annual funding from the San Diego Foundation through its Binational Resilience Initiative to expand green infrastructure in Baja California. The work centers on the Mexican portion of the Tijuana River watershed, but its environmental and resilience benefits reach communities on both sides of the U.S.–Mexico border.

In 2025, activities continued alongside Mexican partners (including Fundación La Puerta, A.C. and the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC), Valle de las Palmas Campus) through projects in Tecate and Tijuana. Central to this effort is the Green Infrastructure Manual for the State of Baja California, a technical resource designed to help embed green infrastructure principles into the upcoming revision of the state's environmental legislation. The initiative also continues to strengthen cross-border collaboration through capacity building and nature-based solutions that improve watershed resilience and reduce the environmental risks both countries share.

National Geographic's Preserving Legacies: TRNERR's Training and Engagement Program is serving as site custodians in the National Geographic's Preserving Legacies program, a global effort among 43 sites to protect cultural and natural heritage in the context of community-based climate resilience. Strategic planning to integrate Preserving Legacies efforts across other TE initiatives is largely focusing on expanding and deepening the application of cultural heritage in estuary stewardship, management, and in implementation of the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program. An effort central to this is the development of a cultural heritage climate vulnerability assessment with cross-border community members for the Tijuana River Watershed with the State Historic Preservation Office and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II (TETRP II): The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and the Wildlife Conservation Board granted planning and implementation funds to the Tijuana Estuary Foundation to support planning related to [TETRP II Phase 1](#), a tidal prism and wetland restoration project in the Tijuana River Estuary. California State Parks has issued a Notice of Determination, published on the State Clearinghouse on March 24, 2023. A Notice of Availability of the Final EIR/EIS was issued by the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service and published in the Federal Register on March 31, 2023. Under Alternative 2, approximately 68 acres of coastal wetlands and 15 acres of native transitional and upland habitat would be restored within the Tijuana Estuary. In the 2025 calendar year Federal funding opportunities became significantly limited, expected Federal match was not realized, and as a result efforts were initiated to advance the project at approximately 50% the area approved in the EIR/EIS. We anticipate project implementation in the 2027 calendar year.

Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration Project: The State Coastal Conservancy, and CA Department of Water Resources (through the San Diego County Water Authority) awarded CA State Parks planning funds to support design, environmental compliance, and the development of a use agreement for restoration of the abandoned Nelson Sloan Quarry in the Tijuana River Valley (TRV) with sediments excavated from TRV flood control facilities (ex., Goat Canyon Sediment Basin; Smuggler's Gulch) and a salt marsh restoration project (TETRP II Phase I). On July 6, 2023, California State Parks issued a Notice of Determination (NOD) to certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project. The NOD and the FEIR were published on the [State Clearinghouse](#) on July 6, 2023.

Throughout 2025 CA State Parks and County of San Diego Parks and Recreation continued to advance the regulatory permits necessary to implement the restoration. Ongoing negotiation for this work includes: 1) the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, for approvals to place this local material in the upland project site within the Tijuana River Valley; 2) the USFWS and CDFW to work around sensitive species such as the Quino checkerspot butterfly, CA gnatcatcher, and Crotch's bumblebee; and 3) the City of San Diego for 'site development' approvals and Coastal Development permits. The project is anticipated to be an important factor in reducing sediment management costs in the TRV for the next 15 years, and CA State Park is currently seeking funding for project implementation through Prop 4 and other opportunities.

CAL FIRE Cone Collection

In 2025 staff in the Reforestation Services Program coordinated three Big Cone Douglas-Fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*), collections within roughly 125 miles north of the border with Mexico. One of the collections was through the Cones as Goods program and yielded 20 bushels. The other two collections were in the San Bernardino National Forest, with some of the bushels shared with the Forest Service. Those two collections yielded 23 bushels that are currently being processed.

State Coastal Conservancy

The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) has a 40+ year history of working side by side with land managers in the Tijuana River Valley to develop, plan, fund, implement, and manage conservation, restoration and public access projects. We continue to participate in multiple partnerships of state, federal and local stakeholders to achieve the strategic objectives of the Conservancy, as well as those of our partners. The following is an update of SCC's project efforts pertaining to the U.S. and Mexico border region for the 2025 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 (now the Tijuana Estuary Foundation) to support planning related to TETRP II Phase 1, a tidal prism and wetland restoration at the Tijuana River Estuary in the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR). Final design and permit acquisition was awarded and initiated in 2023 and is expected to be complete in the fourth quarter of 2025. In 2024, SCC granted \$30 million to Tijuana Estuary Foundation for the implementation of the project, scheduled to commence in 2026. Subsequently in 2025, SCC partnered with TRNERR staff to apply to NOAA's FY24 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law National Estuarine Research Reserve System Habitat Protection and Restoration Competition for additional funding for the project. SCC was awarded a \$3,848,921 grant to enhance the dune restoration component of the project.

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 2026. 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.

Other Work

SCC staff worked with TRNERR staff and a group of partners to offer a field trip as part of the 2025 CNRA 30x30 Partnership Summit in San Diego. The tour of the Tijuana River Valley and Estuary highlighted the complex environmental, social, and political challenges of managing a critical cross-border ecosystem impacted by pollution, habitat degradation, and public access issues, while showcasing restoration and resilience efforts, and was attended by more than 60 individuals.

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 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 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 have helped to direct federal resources to the prioritized mutual goals of the landscape partners, including many in the Tijuana River Valley border region. The application wasn't successful but resulted in increased collaboration amongst partners.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Border 2025 Program

In 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s U.S.-Mexico Border Program collaborated with its Mexican counterpart, the Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), to advance the Border 2025 program. This partnership has now lasted five years. The Border 2025 program convened the EPA, U.S. and Mexican border States, federally recognized Tribes, and local partners on several environmental efforts. In 2025, key activities included planning and implementing one Imperial-Mexicali Air Quality Task Force meeting, several binational technical meetings supporting wastewater infrastructure, two hazardous waste management workshops, and a first-responder HazTech refresher course. These meetings in the California-Baja California

Region supported the Border 2025 Framework goals and objectives by building capacity and providing technical assistance to local border communities.

The EPA's border work continued to strengthen through the implementation of the U.S.-Mexico Border Program to help meet open commitments of the binational Border 2025 plan. Through this coordination, the EPA leveraged multiple funding sources and programs across divisions to improve environmental protection and public health in the border region. As the Border 2025 Program concludes, discussions and planning are underway to shape its successor, Border 2035: U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program.

Goal 1 - Improve Air Quality

The EPA received a request from the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) for technical and funding assistance to support a hydrogen sulfide monitoring network to raise community awareness of local air quality conditions in the Tijuana River Valley. This project complemented the state of California's initiative to provide air purifiers to residents of the impacted community. The hydrogen sulfide monitoring network was established to detect odors resulting from the transboundary flow of untreated sewage in the Tijuana River. The network includes three monitoring sites in San Ysidro, Nestor, and Imperial Beach. Hydrogen sulfide data from the monitors are being posted publicly on [SDAPCD's website](#) and reviewed to support decision-making. An English/Spanish dashboard provides real-time levels, historical trends, and odor advisory alerts to help residents take protective actions.

The EPA supported Imperial County Air Pollution Control District's (ICAPCD) efforts to address air pollution in the county and shared public health information on the dangers of air pollution. These grant workplans included improving the air quality monitoring system for numerous pollutants and developing and maintaining an ICAPCD-maintained website to share air quality information. Grant funds also supported the ICAPCD public health campaign, Ambientalízate. The campaign raises awareness of the harm caused by burning activities in the airshed and holds an annual summit.

The Imperial Valley–Mexicali Air Quality Task Force held its September 11th meeting. Participants heard updates from the Mexicali Department of Environmental Protection on environmental projects, the EPA on the Border 2025 Program and air-quality goals, and federal, state, and local partners on ongoing projects and reports. The meeting also included time for public comments and discussion.

Goal 2 - Improve Water Quality

EPA made substantial progress in addressing contamination of the Tijuana and New River watersheds.

For the Tijuana watershed, the EPA and SEMARNAT signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to accelerate a 100% solution to the decades-long Tijuana River sewage crisis. In December, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) signed Minute 333, with their Mexican counterpart CILA (Comision Internacional de Limites y Agua), advancing key components of the permanent and urgent 100% solution. EPA held monthly binational technical meetings to coordinate activities and track Mexico's progress, with a snapshot below:

- The Tijuana River Gates project, which started construction in September, will prevent at least 5 million gallons per day (MGD) of untreated sewage from entering the river channel in dry weather conditions.
- Mexico began procurement processes for both the rehabilitation of PB-1 (pump station in Tijuana to move flows to the coast for treatment) and the diversion of 10 MGD of treated effluent from the Arturo Herrera and La Morita wastewater treatment plants.
- Mexico initiated and fully funded the rehabilitation of the Parallel Gravity Line, which is a large sewer line carrying wastewater to the San Antonio de los Buenos treatment plant.
- EPA supported the IBWC's expansion and rehabilitation of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant from 25 MGD to 50 MGD. As an interim measure, IBWC increased the primary treatment capacity from 25 MGD to 35 MGD in August.

For the Mexicali watershed, the EPA's Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) co-funded two completed projects. Together, the projects received \$24 million in combined investments to rehabilitate wastewater collection systems (Phases I & II) and critical force mains to improve Mexicali's wastewater collection and pipeline system. This will prevent raw sewage from contaminating the New River. Another project is the upgrade of Mexicali's Las Arenitas Wastewater Treatment Plant, currently under development. The Las Arenitas Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion aims to achieve a 99.8% reclamation goal via an activated sludge system. The expansion is designed to divert 34 MGD of wastewater from entering the New River, addressing the plant's current maximum capacity constraints.

Goal 3 – Promote Sustainable Materials Management and Waste Management, and Clean Sites



Figure 1 Image caption: CA-MX Border Hazardous Waste Management Workshop Presentation by EPA Pacific Southwest Region (December).

DTSC and EPA Region 9 co-hosted two virtual California- México Border Hazardous Waste Management Workshops with over 100 participants. The first workshop, held on June 24th, featured DTSC presentations on hazardous waste determination and import/export regulations, and presentations by San Diego County and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance on spent lithium battery transportation and management. The second workshop, held on December 16th, featured presentations by the EPA on its resources for managing hazardous, universal, and solid waste; SEMARNAT on managing hazardous, electrical, and electronic waste in Mexico; and DTSC on importing and exporting universal waste.

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



On December 2, 2025, First Responder Awareness, First Responder Operations, and HazTech Refresher courses were conducted in Mexicali, Baja California, as shown in Image 2. Topics covered in the binational training were:

- 1) securing the scene: establishing perimeters and keeping unauthorized individuals away;

- 2) basic containment: utilizing defensive techniques like damming, diking, absorption, and diversion;
- 3) exposure protection: protecting exposures and preventing the chemical from spreading into waterways or populated areas; and
- 4) decontamination: implementing basic, initial decontamination procedures for victims and responders.

Cross-cutting program activities



Figure 2 USEPA Staffers Support Outreach Table at Lipay Nation of Santa Isabel's Earth Day

Lastly, the EPA provided educational materials and outreach at five Earth Day events in Tribal communities. Regional staff supported events at the Cocopah Indian Tribe, Campo Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, and Lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel. They shared educational materials and conducted outreach focused on environmental health, air quality, asthma, and the Border Program.

Transportation

Caltrans District 11 (D11) encompasses the entire border region 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. D11's efforts focus on improving border infrastructure, increasing the efficiency of cross-border movements, and reducing environmental impacts. In 2025, D11 made significant progress in addressing congestion, enhancing mobility, and supporting economic growth through various projects and initiatives.

Last year, in 2025, California's ports of entry processed over 103.4 million border crossings with 18.6 million pedestrians, 31.1 million personal vehicles, and 1.5 million commercial trucks, underscoring the significant role the region plays in the nation's trade economy. All the traditional ports of entry experienced growth in pedestrian traffic compared to 2024 crossings. The San Ysidro and Otay Mesa Ports of Entry ranked first and fourth, respectively, on the U.S. Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics 2025 Port Ranking list for busiest ports of entry.

To alleviate the impacts of congestion, Caltrans, alongside federal agencies like U.S. CBP and CHP, has explored innovative technological solutions. This includes the Border Wait Time System, which provides real-time information on border wait times, and the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry (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.

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. The 2028 California-Baja California Border Master Plan Update focusing on creating a seamless, accessible, and sustainable transportation network that promotes economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship, ultimately improving the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors to the California-Baja California border region. 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 zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) charging stations.

Transportation Section

The California-Mexico border is home to seven international crossings, two of which are among the busiest in the United States. Six traditional Ports of Entry (POEs): San Ysidro/Virginia Avenue-Puerta México/El Chaparral, Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay, Tecate-Tecate, Calexico West-Mexicali I, Calexico East-Mexicali II, and Andrade-Los Algodones. The seventh border crossing is the Cross Border Xpress (CBX)/Tijuana Airport, a hybrid POE in that it is a privately operated paid-use facility for direct access between San Diego County in the United States and the Tijuana International Airport in Mexico.

In 2025, California's ports of entry processed over 103.4 million border crossings with 18.6 million pedestrians, 31.1 million personal vehicles, and 1.5 million commercial trucks. 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, CHP, and U.S. CBP are responsible for safe and efficient cross border mobility. These agencies collaborate on innovative solutions and exploring opportunities to create a safe, integrated, efficient, and secure transportation system along the California-Mexico border.

California-Baja California Border Master Plan

The California-Baja California Border Master Plan (CA-Baja CA 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 CA-Baja CA 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 CA-Baja CA region over the next 20 years.

In addition, the 2021 CA-Baja CA 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.

Since the 2021 CA-Baja CA BMP, various efforts have been completed or initiated, and we are now presented with new challenges and opportunities to continue the work that has been ongoing with the BMP. A \$750,000 State Planning and Research (SP&R) grant was awarded in 2025 to update the previous BMP to address evolving economic, demographic, and environmental conditions that impact the equity factors of border crossings and infrastructure. A new focus will be to integrate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and multimodal options to reduce congestion, emissions, and wait times, while enhancing connectivity between communities. This new CA-Baja BMP will be titled the 2028 CA-Baja

CA BMP Update and has been in the procurement phase with an estimated start of summer 2026.

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.

In early 2025, Caltrans activated new air quality monitors on State Route 11, the Enrico Fermi Bridge, and La Media Road using state funds to support enhanced environmental monitoring along the border freight corridor. Through Caltrans's partnership with San Diego State University, SDSU researchers are now assisting Caltrans in operating and monitoring these stations, strengthening the State's ability to better understand localized air quality conditions. Caltrans also worked with community-based organizations in the San Ysidro area to install a new air quality monitor near the San Ysidro Port of Entry on Interstate 5. This collaborative effort reflects Caltrans' commitment to proactively identifying and addressing potential adverse impacts of transportation projects on border communities through data-driven, research-based approaches.

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 and Caltrans are developing 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 (Federal Project)

The Otay Mesa POE is the busiest commercial port in California. It processed more than \$21.4 billion in exports and \$38.4 billion in imports in calendar year 2025. Additionally, the Otay Mesa POE processed more than 3.5 million pedestrians and more than 6.1 million vehicles.

Otay Mesa CHP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility (State Project)

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 completed construction in March 2025.

State Route 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry (Federal, State, Local Project)

Caltrans and SANDAG are 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 congestion price 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 INFRA Grant Agreement was awarded in 2023 but executed and \$150 million has been obligated in 2025. On August 2025, Caltrans opened the final stretch of SR-11 and the Siempre Viva Road Interchange which will provide access to the future Port of Entry (Photo 1). Construction of the Port of Entry began in November 2025 and is set to partially open to the public in late 2028 (Photo 2 and 3).

Additionally, in August 2025, Caltrans requested funding allocation for ATP 1 construction. This package includes fine grading installation of site perimeter security fence, installation of wet and dry utilities pipe/conduits, and procurement of long lead items such as border fence, high mast site lighting, and inspection booths. Caltrans will also request funding for the technology package, which will include Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology. The request for funding is anticipated for June 2026.

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. The project completed construction in November 2025.

Calexico West Land Port of Entry Modernization and Expansion Project (Federal 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 (Federal, State, and Local 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. After its completion, the US and Mexican Federal Governments rearranged the lane configuration.

Calexico West Pedestrian Feasibility Study (Federal Project)

This feasibility study is evaluating pedestrian enhancements that will improve the border crossing experience, improve efficiency of movement through the border, and encourage a greater number of pedestrian crossings at the Calexico West Port of Entry. This includes ITS strategies to expedite security processes, wayfinding signage with real-time border crossing information, and other pedestrian amenities. These strategies will align with the objectives set forth in the 2021 CA-Baja CA BMP and will optimize the use of existing infrastructure and projects under development with a focus on innovative and multimodal strategies for improving active transportation facilities at the Calexico West Port of Entry.

Calexico Imperial County Transportation Commission – Intermodal Transportation Center

Downtown Calexico's port of entry is one of the busiest ports in the nation with an estimated 20,000 pedestrian crossing the border daily into Imperial Valley from Mexico to work, attend school or shop. The number of crossers at the downtown POE is expected to increase with the planned expansion of the new Pedestrian Facility in 2030. This facility, the Calexico ITC, will serve as a regional mobility hub that will accommodate bus bays, provide pedestrian friendly access improvements, reduce congestion and GHG emissions and provide a safer and secure transportation experience. This project was achieved using \$12.9 million USDOT through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. \$1.1 million in ATP grant and 1\$ million of Regional Early Action Planning (REAP 2.0) County Transpirations Commissions Partnership Programs.

Calexico East Land Port of Entry Joint Operations System Project

The purpose of the Calexico East Joint Operating System (JOS) POE project is to improve the efficiency, reliability, and resiliency of freight movement along the Calexico East corridor, while supporting binational trade, community health, and California's climate and economic goals. The project will explore the implementation of a joint operations system at

the Calexico East Port of Entry (POE), including ITS and roadway improvements to the existing POE infrastructure.

The project will create the foundation for a Commercial Vehicle Appointment System (CVAS) and related Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements that reduce congestion, streamline border operations, and enhance environmental outcomes. The project also proposes a Border Wait Time System that gathers 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 CVAS. A Project Initiation Document (PID) is anticipated to be completed in summer 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-duty and heavy-duty (MD/HD) 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 MD/HD 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. The feasibility study was completed in June 2024, with 69 sites assessed and 22 candidate sites selected for further analysis in the next phase of the project. In 2025, we narrowed 15 sites to be explored in the PID. The sites will include adding MD/HD ZEV Charging and expanding existing parking lots to add truck parking; adding MD/HD ZEV Charging to existing parking; and adding new truck parking and MD/HD ZEV Charging. The Project Initiation Document is expected to be finalized in summer 2026.

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. This effort aimed at studying the feasibility of the reinstatement of the San Diego and Arizona Eastern (SD&AE) “Desert Line” Railroad to reduce truck traffic at ports of entry and mitigate the environmental and economic impacts associated with commercial vehicle idling at the border. This 150-mile short-line railroad traverses Baja California, Mexico, and runs through eastern San Diego County into Imperial County.

In 2023, a \$500,000 SP&R grant to fund a feasibility study was approved. The study included a market assessment and a cost estimate for reinstating service along the Desert Line. The study was completed in June 2025.

California - Mexico Binational Rail Strategy

The 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 Strategy 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 SP&R grant was approved to support the development of this plan. The strategy is expected to be completed by September 2026.

SANDAG – Border Resiliency Plan

The border region has been historically overburdened by water and air pollution on communities that have fewer resources to cope with these impacts. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these impacts with more frequent wildfires, floods, severe storms, and heat waves, and place an increased stress on transportation and other public infrastructure. In 2024, a \$3,000,000 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) was approved to support the development of the Border Resiliency Plan. The Border Resiliency Plan will identify climate and public health stressors in the California-Baja California border region and build consensus around the development of a recommended list of prioritized transportation-related climate adaptation strategies, programs, and projects that reduce climate pollution, promote environmental justice and provide co-

benefits to improving water and air quality. Recommendations of the Plan will be considered in the 2028 CA-Baja CA BMP Update.

Work on this plan kicked off in January 2025. Stakeholder engagement has been occurring to expand outreach to community groups and stakeholders in the border region, including local, state, and federal agencies; this includes coordinating with Federal Land Management Agencies, the Tribal Nations, and the Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) to gain insights about their climate and environmental concerns while maintaining and strengthening binational coordination on climate hazards and community vulnerabilities affecting the border region. The plan is expected to be completed in 2027.

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 Calexico Gateway Monument in Imperial County was completed in June 2023 and a \$2.9 million San Ysidro Gateway Monument in San Diego County that completed in June 2024.

In 2025, Caltrans used remaining funds in the Clean CA Program to identify pedestrian bridge improvements near the San Ysidro border. The bridge serves as a critical connection across Interstate 5, including to Willow Elementary School, the nearby transit centers, and other community assets, and improvements aimed to activate public space and foster community pride. In collaboration with community-based organizations and artists, District 11 is adding an artistic pavement treatment that preserves the surface of the bridge, reduces graffiti and maintenance, and includes solar reflectivity for reducing urban heat island effects. The project will also pilot small sections of glow-in-the-dark paint to address lighting and safety for pedestrians at night. Construction will be completed in Spring 2026.



Photo 1: SR-11 / Siempre Viva Interchange Opening Ceremony





Photo 2 and 3: SR-11 / Otay Mesa East Project Renderings



Photo 4: SR-905 Landscaping from Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office



Photo 5: Imperial County Transportation Commission- Intermodal Transit Center in Calexico under construction



Photo 6: Air Quality Monitor installation near San Ysidro Port of Entry



Photo 7: Clean CA Willow Pedestrian Bridge pavement treatment concept

Health

In 2025, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continued to promote health equity by communicating and collaborating with local, state, and federal partners in the California–Baja California border region and throughout California.

California Department of Public Health, Office of Binational Border Health

The CDPH Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH) was legislatively mandated in 1999 by Assembly Bill 63 (Health and Safety Code, Section 475) to facilitate cooperation between California and Mexico health officials and professionals to reduce the risk of disease in the California border region. Its 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 collaborates with partners on both sides of the border to address priority issues through binational projects, including cross-border meetings, forums, and epidemiology partnerships focused on public health concerns of mutual interest with Mexico. More information about OBBH is available on its website: [CDPH-Office of Binational Border Health](#).

Highlights of OBBH's 2025 projects include:

2023 Border Health Status Report to the Legislature

[The 2023 Border Health Status Report](#) to the Legislature (released in 2025) highlights the unique public health challenges shaped by the lived experiences of the U.S.–Mexico border population. The Healthy Border 2030 and Healthy People 2030 initiatives serve as guiding frameworks for identifying key health indicators. This report covers demographic characteristics and health indicators related to obesity, diabetes, suicide, tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, select vaccine-preventable diseases, and COVID-19 in California's border region (San Diego and Imperial counties). It presents data on these diseases and conditions by comparing the southern border region with California overall. Ultimately, the report underscores the uniqueness and dynamism of the

region, revealing significant geographic and ethnic disparities across the health indicators examined.

Binational Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Virtual Training

The Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH) collaborated with the CDPH's Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program to develop, coordinate, and implement a virtual training session on July 30, 2025. This training was designed specifically for healthcare providers in Baja California, with a focus on nursing staff, and covered best practices for injection safety. Participating agencies from California included OBBH and the CDPH Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Program. Participating agencies from Baja California included the Health Services Institute of the State of Baja California (ISESALUD BC) and the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS).

San Diego & Imperial Counties Border Health Collaborative

The San Diego & Imperial Counties Border Health Collaborative (Collaborative) is a joint project coordinated by OBBH, the County of San Diego, and the Imperial County Public Health Department. Its purpose is to convene representatives from government, healthcare, academia, and nonprofit organizations to work together on priority public health issues. The mission of the Collaborative is to strengthen communication, collaboration, and coordination to protect and improve the health of individuals, families, and communities in California's southern border region of San Diego and Imperial counties. In 2025, the Collaborative held six meetings featuring speakers on a range of health topics, including cancer, preventive strategies, resource sharing, environmental health, HIV awareness, Valley Fever, Medi-Cal updates, and the Tijuana River Valley. To support preparation for Collaborative meetings, monthly planning meetings are held by the steering committee and the resources and communications groups, composed of selected representatives from San Diego County's Office of Border Health, Imperial County's Public Health Department, and the Office of Binational Border Health.

Community Health Worker (CHW)/ Promotora Trainings

In collaboration with the California Department of Healthcare Access and Information—Office of Rural Health, the Office of Binational Border Health coordinated a training initiative to strengthen mental and behavioral health knowledge among farmworker communities in rural Ventura County. To ensure the effort was community-driven, OBBH surveyed promotores and community health workers (CHWs), who identified mental and behavioral health as the top priority. Based on this input, OBBH developed and implemented a Spanish-language train-the-trainer program focused on mental and behavioral health and related community resources. The primary in-person session was held on April 4, 2025, in Oxnard, CA, followed by an orientation and debrief session to

support ongoing facilitation and skill-building. After the training, promotores and CHWs conducted voluntary community outreach to share information and connect residents with local resources. In total, 19 trained CHWs reached 112 community members across 12 cities in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Kern counties, expanding access to culturally relevant mental health education in rural communities.

San Diego County Promotores Coalition

The Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH) actively supported the San Diego County Promotores Coalition (SDCPC) through ongoing collaboration, coordinated planning, and strong partnership-building efforts. This work included engaging coalition partners, sharing community health resources, and aligning joint activities with OBBH and SDCPC priorities. As part of these efforts, OBBH coordinated with CDPH's Immunization Branch and the County of San Diego to arrange a guest presentation at the SDCPC general meeting at Southwestern College on November 19, 2025. During the meeting, the County of San Diego's Public Health Services, Epidemiology & Immunization Services Branch provided an informational update on respiratory viruses and current vaccine recommendations.

Advisory Group

OBBH's Advisory Group consists of 12 members from multiple sectors representing the California Conference of Local Health Officers, local government agencies, health plans, hospitals, community-based organizations, health consumers, and universities, who represent different geographic regions that serve urban and rural communities in California. The Advisory Group supports OBBH's mission by helping to develop and monitor a strategic plan for OBBH to address border and binational health issues. Additionally, they advise the California Department of Public Health and the California members of the U.S.—Mexico Border Health Commission on critical health concerns. In 2025, two public meetings were held by the OBBH Advisory Group to discuss ongoing border health work related to the Border Infectious Disease Surveillance (BIDS) program, the Border Health Status Report, and binational case surveillance.

Safety

Efforts to ensure border safety remain a top priority, primarily through the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program and the California Maritime Security Program. Operation Stonegarden resulted in significant joint operational partnerships, narcotic seizures, arrests, emergency management, 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

Cal OES maintains strong partnerships with Mexico, recognizing the critical importance of cross-border cooperation in safeguarding communities on both sides of the border. In 2025, this collaboration included coordinated wildfire response in Los Angeles County with Mexican firefighting personnel and active monitoring of environmental, maritime, and public safety incidents along the border. Cal OES also participated in information-sharing forums, binational emergency communications working groups, and community outreach through the Mexican Consulate, while continuing to track transboundary wastewater flows from the Tijuana River and notifying U.S. stakeholders. And ahead of major upcoming events, Cal OES participated in a multi-agency emergency exercise in Los Angeles alongside over 20 consulates, including Mexico, to strengthen coordination and communication.

Operation Stonegarden Program

Operation Stonegarden is a federal homeland security grant program through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The intent of the program is to strengthen public safety and national security in border regions by improving coordination among federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. The program funds activities such as joint patrols, communication system improvements, coordinated incident response, and officer training to address organized criminal activity, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and potential terrorism along the border. In California, Cal OES administers the Operation Stonegarden program at the state level. While the federal government determines overall eligibility, makes funding decisions, and sets national policy priorities, Cal OES ensures that California's implementation complies with state law and reflects California's public safety priorities. It is important to note that California's participation in Operation Stonegarden follows state law under the California Values Act of 2017. The legislation prohibits state and local law enforcement agencies from using their resources for immigration enforcement. Cal OES currently administers Operation Stonegarden for the state's three southern border counties: Imperial, Riverside, and San Diego. For the 2025 grant cycle, those counties were collectively awarded \$12.1 million in federal funds. California's oversight of the program ensures federal funds are applied in ways that respect the state's laws, uphold community trust, and improve safety for all Californians living and working in border regions.

Operation Stonegarden in Imperial County is administered by the Imperial County Sheriff's Office, with El Centro Sector (ELC) having operational oversight, and includes a total of 15 participating agencies (Appendix E.1). The Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) operating in the ELC region are involved in a network of criminal activities, including the smuggling, transportation, and distribution of migrants, currency, weapons, and narcotics. The goal of current and past collaboration between ELC and Imperial Valley Operation Stonegarden partners has been to make the operational environment hostile to TCOs by targeting their reliance on motor vehicles and travel corridors to smuggle their illicit cargo.

Similarly, Operation Stonegarden for the San Diego Sector, administered by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, involves 28 participating agencies (Appendix E.2). The San Diego Sector provides enforcement capabilities along international maritime borders from the U.S.-Mexico border to San Mateo County, covering approximately 489 linear miles of coastline north of San Diego County. Together, the agencies participating in the San Diego Sector provided an increased law enforcement presence in their designated areas of jurisdiction to support U.S. Customs and Border Protection efforts in the region, aiming to reduce border-related crime and further enhance border security.

Operation Stonegarden Accomplishments:

During calendar year 2025, Imperial County Sheriff's Office and participating Operation Stonegarden Friendly Forces increased their patrol mileage by 40% over calendar year 2024 totals. In the second half of 2025, ELC kept a strong presence in the field. This enhanced Operation Stonegarden patrol presence along major travel corridors in the ELC region, providing vital support for ELC's enduring counter-network border security efforts. These operations resulted in the seizure of significant quantities of illicit drugs and bulk cash, as well as the removal of firearms from criminal circulation (Appendix E.3). During the calendar year 2025, San Diego Sector, along with its Operation Stonegarden-participating local and state law enforcement agencies, conducted a range of operations (Appendix E.4). This included two major operations named "Operation Hourglass" and "Operation Gridlock".

2025 Operation Hourglass:

This operation took place between January 15, 2025, and February 28, 2025, focusing on domestic highway enforcement within San Diego County. During this 45-day operation, partners worked collaboratively with the United States Border Patrol to leverage their law enforcement resources for a unified and integrated criminal highway interdiction. Operation Hourglass resulted in the seizure of illicit narcotics, firearms, and bulk currency, along with multiple arrests (Appendix E.5).

2025 Operation Gridlock:

This operation took place on November 3, 12, and 19, 2025, as well as December 4 and 12, 2025. This operation was intended to gather intelligence, disrupt and dismantle, and ultimately terminate the criminal activity associated with drug trafficking and TCOs using Southern California interstates and highway corridors. It was a five-day, multi-agency, multijurisdictional narcotics, currency, and weapons interdiction operation within San Diego, Orange, and Riverside Counties. During the operation, participating agencies simultaneously targeted Interstate 5, Interstate 8, Interstate 15, and adjacent state routes, resulting in the seizure of illicit narcotics and bulk currency, along with multiple arrests (Appendix E.6).

California Maritime Security Program

California's Maritime Security Program coordinates maritime safety and security awareness across the California Coastal Region, with units stationed in Sacramento, Northern, and Southern California. These units work collaboratively with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the U.S. Navy, and other federal, state, and local maritime stakeholders, addressing maritime governance, emergency management, and information sharing. The maritime program is embedded into the USCG sectors and district, and the California State Threat Assessment Center. Maritime Governance is led by the California Maritime Security Council, which serves as the Governor's advisory body on maritime security matters. The council has proven a vital resource for California's maritime community, bringing together stakeholders from public and private sectors, providing a forum to discuss impacts and best practices for the maritime community. The program's collaboration extends to marine training, meetings, and occasional operations with Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy. Cal OES serves as advisors, sharing best practices and lessons learned with Mexican counterparts.

Efforts are ongoing between the USCG, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cal OES, and the Mexican Government to respond to oil spills. When a spill occurs, a Unified Command is established, led by the USCG and including representatives from various stakeholders. Cal OES Maritime plays a coordinating role for the liaison unit, appoints the Local Government On-Scene Coordinator, and leads the Marine Transportation Systems Recovery Unit within the Unified Command. Advanced technologies are employed for mapping and modeling during oil spills that extend across the maritime boundary with Mexico. The Coast Guard and Cal OES have developed a Maritime Domain Awareness Common Operating Picture with information dashboards. These dashboards will display real-time information on the maritime boundary between Mexico and California.

In 2025, California and Mexico's joint responses were required for small spills and 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/Mexico

In 2025, California and Mexico continued to strengthen binational emergency management coordination. In January, major wildfires in Los Angeles County prompted a rapid, cross-border response, with Mexico deploying 71 firefighting personnel to support California operations, while Baja California remained on standby. Cal OES and CAL FIRE coordinated closely to integrate this international assistance.

Throughout the year, Cal OES Southern Region actively monitored activity along the U.S.-Mexico border to stay informed on environmental, maritime, and public safety issues. Cal OES remained ready to provide support if requested by San Diego or Imperial Counties. Staff participated in regular information sharing meetings, including the US- Mexico Border Alliance monthly calls, and in Area Maritime Security Committee meetings, conferences, exercises, and collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard – Sector San Diego.

Cal OES maintained coordination with the International Boundary and Water Commission on transboundary wastewater flows affecting the Tijuana River. In 2025, the California State Warning Center received 11 spill notifications and ensured timely information sharing with relevant U.S. stakeholders.

Beyond response efforts, Cal OES also advanced community preparedness through outreach efforts, including participation in Labor Rights Week at the Mexican Consulate in Sacramento, where Spanish-language emergency preparedness resources were provided. Cal OES further supported cross-border communication through participation in the San Diego County-led Binational Emergency Communications Working Group.

In preparation for upcoming large-scale events such as the FIFA World Cup 2026 and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Cal OES joined a Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management–led exercise in partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School.

The effort included over 20 consulates in Los Angeles, including Mexico. The exercise simulated a mass-casualty incident at LAX, focusing on communication and coordination among participating agencies and partners.

Listos California

Housed within the Cal OES Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Listos California is a statewide initiative that strengthens community disaster preparedness by partnering with trusted local messengers who are deeply connected to the communities they serve. The program provides culturally relevant preparedness resources and training - available in over 20 languages, including Spanish and Indigenous languages of Mexico - to communities that have historically lacked access to this vital information.

In addition to direct community engagement, Listos California has partnered with the Hispanic Federation to provide input and recommended edits to the Latino Policy Agenda, helping ensure that disaster preparedness and response equity remain part of Latino policy discussions.

In 2025, Listos California grantees - many serving immigrant and migrant communities - held more than 13,200 community events, reaching over 3.9 million individuals statewide. Outreach focused on seniors, farmworkers, people with disabilities, individuals experiencing homelessness, geographically isolated communities, households with limited English proficiency, and immigrants and refugees.

CAL FIRE

Binational Training and Capacity Building for Coordinated Border Response:

CAL FIRE conducted its annual binational two-week training program, focusing on aligning communication protocols for joint operations, sharing modern suppression techniques, and enhancing real-time data exchange with Mexican counterparts. These efforts help strengthen incident response and ensure integrated regional coordination and fire management strategies amongst agencies while also mitigating the risk for communities on both sides of the border. Additionally, CAL FIRE's longstanding assistance maintaining the 1,800-acre, 38-mile International Border Fuel Break helped prevent the spread of a wildfire from Baja California into San Diego County in June 2025.

Mutual Aid and Emergency Assistance & Suppression:

CAL FIRE continued its longstanding history of cross-border collaboration and cooperation with Mexico.

- In January 2025, Mexico deployed a team of 72 skilled firefighters and emergency personnel to assist with the L.A. Fires.

- In June 2025, CAL FIRE's San Diego Unit (SDU) assisted Mexican counterparts on the 2,200-acre Mexico Assist Fire wildfire.
 - Later that month, the unit deployed a strike team of hand crews and a bulldozer to Baja California, helping to limit the Guadalajara 2 Complex and Walara fire to 44,00 acres and protecting 11 communities while safeguarding critical bi-national green energy infrastructure.

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Appendix A

Figure 1. Trade Statistics with Mexico¹

(Billions of U.S. dollars)	2024	2025	% Change
U.S. Exports to Mexico	334.04	337.96	1.2
CA Exports to Mexico	33.52	34.91	4.1
U.S. Imports from Mexico	505.85	534.87	5.7
CA Imports from Mexico	64.30	61.56	-4.3
U.S. Total Trade with Mexico	839.89	872.83	3.9
CA Total Trade with Mexico	97.81	96.47	-1.4

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

CARB Support and Involvement

CARB's Enforcement Division worked with SDAPCD to develop a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) proposal to fund indoor air filtration in San Diego County. In April 2025, SDAPCD's SEP addressing the odors coming from the Tijuana River Valley was partially funded for \$133,335.50. Funding helped SDAPCD distribute air filters to residents directly affected by the odors. The SEP continues to be on the Available SEPs List until it is fully funded. Additionally, CARB staff worked alongside SDAPCD to facilitate \$2.7M in CAP Incentives interest funds from the AB 617 program for a residential air filtration program, aimed at communities impacted by air pollution in the Tijuana River Valley.

Monitoring and Research

Salton City Metals Monitoring

CARB's Monitoring and Laboratory Division (MLD) conducted metals monitoring from July 2024 through June 2025 at a site in Salton City using a continuous XRF analyzer. MLD staff are currently evaluating the collected data and comparing it to measurements from South Coast AQMD's comparable monitor located in Mecca. CARB anticipates presenting its findings to the community in fall 2026.

California Statewide Mobile Monitoring Initiative

As part of [California's Statewide Mobile Monitoring Initiative \(SMMI\)](#), CARB, in conjunction with the ICAPCD and Aclima, launched its community air monitoring project guiding future actions as a part of SMMI.

The SMMI performed mobile monitoring at consistently nominated communities in Imperial County from July 2025 through March 2026 including: Niland, Desert Shores, Salton Sea Beach, Salton Sea, Bombay Beach, Seeley, Salton City, and Chiriaco Summit. Mobile monitoring collected block-by-block data on air quality throughout these communities.

In March and April 2025, SMMI engagement leads held community meetings with Salton City residents, local organizations, and stakeholders to discuss ongoing concerns about air quality to inform community air monitoring plans and to explore community-driven solutions for protecting public health.

Imperial County/Mexicali Air Alerts, Forecasts & Website

In 2025, CARB was awarded \$311,000 in EPA Clean Air Act, Section 105 grant funding. This was to continue efforts with ICAPCD to support air quality alerts, forecasts, and the Imperial Valley Air website (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. The project did not operate in 2025 but resumed March 1, 2026.

Improving Biomass Burning Estimates in Mexico

In May 2025, CARB completed a study 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. The project team leveraged outcomes from the 2024 ground truthing activities and 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, to refine their emissions estimation tools. This enhanced data accuracy and supported more effective mitigation strategies for the [region](#).

San Ysidro Monitoring Pilot Project

CARB staff deployed eight Clarity Nodes that measure PM_{2.5} and 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.

In 2025, trained community members supported the monitoring portion of this project by conducting routine assessments of the air quality sensors and provided regular updates on monitor status to CARB. This project, funded by EPA, aims to quantify the air quality burden, increase air quality awareness, and build monitoring capacity within the San Ysidro community.

Tracking Vehicle Fleet Emissions in San Ysidro

In 2025, CARB prepared for a study that will deploy roadside remote sensing devices (RSD) to measure light-duty vehicle tailpipe emissions in the San Ysidro area in 2026. This weeklong campaign will be a follow-up to a previous RSD study at the same location in 2023. The data will be used to track emission trends for vehicles operating in or near California-Mexico border communities, evaluate vehicle emission disparities between

communities of different socioeconomic statuses, and characterize border-crossing fleet profiles (e.g. MX-plated vs. dual-plated vehicles).

CARB High-resolution Advanced Monitoring Program (CHAMP)

CARB's Research Division is leading the establishment of the CARB High-resolution Advanced Monitoring Program (CHAMP) by collaborating with the Monitoring and Laboratory Division, the Air Quality Planning and Science Division, and local Air Districts. This program collects continuous, long-term datasets of non-refractory speciated PM_{2.5}, black carbon, and size-resolved aerosols at high time resolution across the state, including at CARB's regulatory site in Calexico (1085 Andrade Ave, Calexico, CA 92231; AQS ID: 060250005; CARB ID: 13698) and the San Diego Air Pollution Control District's East Otay Mesa/Donovan site (480 Alta Rd., San Diego, CA 92179; AQS ID: 060731014). State-of-the-art analyzers were deployed at the Calexico site in December 2025, with additional instruments scheduled for deployment at the East Otay Mesa site in 2026.

An upcoming research contract with UC Davis (contract 25RD002), beginning in 2026 and lasting three years, will support CARB in establishing CHAMP. The long-term dataset generated near the Mexicali-Tijuana border will enhance understanding of PM_{2.5} composition, trends, and transboundary transport. This effort will also inform CARB's emissions inventory and support modeling used in the State Implementation Plans (SIPs) to guide targeted mitigation strategies.

Improvement of the Toxic-metal Aerosol Real-Time Analysis (TARTA) Instrument for Field Deployment

CARB has an active contract (23RD-IT001) with San Diego State University (SDSU) to develop and improve the Toxic-metal Aerosol Real-Time Analysis (TARTA) instrument, a low-cost sensor that measures toxic metals in real time for community monitoring. The project is scheduled to conclude in mid-2028, at which point SDSU will deliver five TARTA instruments to CARB and provide training to support future community monitoring deployments.

Through a EPA grant, the project's principal investigator trained CBOs, including Comite Civico del Valle (CCV), on the use of TARTA in 2025 and plans to collaborate with them to deploy several units in the Imperial Valley in 2026.

Imperial Valley Community-Focused Collaborative Research Plan

CARB has an active contract in the Imperial Valley with SDSU-Imperial Valley campus in partnership with the Imperial Valley-based environmental justice organization CCV. The project aims to develop a community-centric strategic research plan that reflects

community concerns and priorities. The plan will guide future health and air quality research to increase health equity in the Imperial Valley region. The project will conclude in mid-2026, and a report will be available.

Salton Sea Dust Exposure and Potential Health Effects

In April 2025, a 3-year, multi-campus research project to assess dust emissions from the Salton Sea playa for possible correlations with existing health data from the region began, with sampling completed in winter 2025. Dust samples will be analyzed for pesticides and heavy metals, and exposure estimates will be calculated for different areas around the Salton Sea. Modelling will be undertaken to predict potential resident exposures under various scenarios, including future climate change-related factors such as dust storm formation and the possible health impacts associated with these exposures. Based on the results from this study, strategies to mitigate dust emissions and reduce residents' exposures will be suggested.

Technical and Capacity Building Support for Border Region Partners

In April 2025, MLD completed a certification of Secretariat for Environmental and Sustainable Development of Baja California (SMADS) gas calibrator. In October 2025, CARB donated two gas flow meters to SMADS for use in calibrating their ambient air monitoring equipment.

Funding and Engagement

CHP Industry Appreciation Day

On February 24, 2025, 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. CARB presented on Clean Truck Check and other heavy-duty programs and provided technical assistance at an exhibitor booth.

Truck Regulation Implementation Group Border Meetings

In 2025, CARB continued to oversee the Truck Regulation Implementation Group (TRIG), focused on air quality and transportation regulations in California. Supporting the introduction and advancement of zero-emission technologies into California's truck and bus fleets allowing fleets to shift to the cleanest available technology is part of a comprehensive strategy to achieve the cleanest technology for truck and bus fleets by 2045 everywhere feasible, including in the border region. This includes increasing clean, affordable transportation options such as zero-emission technologies, innovative methods to improve freight activity, and efficiency of the State's transportation systems.

This TRIG work group focusing on infrastructure was established in the fall of 2023 along with 3 other TRIG work group focus areas: Rules Provisions, Border Communities and Outreach. Two of the 6 total TRIG meetings 2023-2025 focusing on infrastructure were held on February 10, 2025, and May 12, 2025. Presentations and recordings of past TRIG meetings are available on the [ZE Infrastructure Website](#) and the [Advanced Clean Fleets meetings and events website](#).

On August 11, 2025, TRIG held an Infrastructure Meeting. The meeting was organized to inform truck drivers, fleets, and dealers about publicly accessible heavy-duty electric charging and hydrogen fueling infrastructure currently available or expected within the next year, including station access, hours of operation and payment options.

California Climate Investments

Clean Transportation Incentives continue to be an important part of CARB's efforts in improving air quality, including in the border region. The Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) program SR-15 Transportation Equity & Affordable Housing Task Force in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego remains an important investment and example of what is possible with CCI funded projects. 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 new affordable housing developments in the neighborhood.

The STEP project improvements continued through 2025 and 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.

San Diego County Clean Transportation Tribal and Rural Tour Recap



Figure 1: San Diego County Tribal & Rural Tour participants posing for a photo

CARB, in partnership with Jill Sherman-Warne, Executive Director of Native American Environmental Protection Coalition and Hoopa Tribal member, organized a two-day Clean Transportation Tribal and Rural Tour (Tour) across San Diego County on June 24–25, 2025. The tour aimed to strengthen relationships with tribal communities and gather firsthand insights to inform CARB’s clean transportation incentive programs. CARB staff and partners visited several tribes across San Diego County, where leaders described challenges such as unreliable energy, difficult terrain, high fuel costs, and barriers to accessing grants. Tribes highlighted key issues including dependence on backup generators, concerns about waiving sovereign immunity, limited staffing capacity, and disparities between gaming and non-gaming tribes in infrastructure development. A post-tour debrief emphasized the need for improved state coordination, utility engagement, and policies that reflect the realities of rural and tribal communities. Insights from the tour will guide future program design and inform ongoing efforts to support clean energy and transportation in priority populations.

Bi-national Memorandum of Understanding Support

In 2025, CARB attended additional planning meetings for the Baja Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CalePA and SMADS. The [MOU](#) aims to improve air quality in the border region. This includes planning for initial phases of MOU implementation around the core priorities of Air Quality and the Circular Economy. CARB coordinated with the Bureau of Automotive Repair and internally with CARB’s Air Quality Planning and Science Division to prepare presentations to SMADS on the California Smog Check Program and CARB’s Black Carbon research.

Enforcement

The tables below provide a summary of enforcement activities on diesel vehicles and equipment near the border region in 2025. Table 1 summarizes deployments of our remote sensing device known as the Portable Emission Acquisition System (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: 2025 PEAQS Deployments Near Border				
Location (City)	Deployment Days	Heavy Duty Vehicles Screened	Heavy Duty Vehicles Inspected	Citations Issued
Calexico	2	1,465	40	26
Otay Mesa	10	16,320	225	109
Winterhaven	2	748	27	18
Total	14	18,533	292	153

Table 2: 2025 Diesel Program Inspections Near Border (includes PEAQS deployment)			
Program	Inspection	Citations	Notes
Commercial Vehicle Idling	1,177	4	This includes inspections from SDAPCD
Off-road equipment	2,980	143	This includes inspections from SDAPCD under an MOU with CARB
Heavy Duty Inspection/ Maintenance	3,080	298	This is a multi-point inspection; one vehicle may have up to 7 inspections
Truck & Bus	599	36	Verifies engine model year meets CARB standards
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 2025	
Total number of vehicles or equipment inspected	5,682
Environmental Justice areas: Total number of vehicles/equipment inspected	940



Figure 8; CARB Enforcement Division staff inspect a heavy-duty vehicle for emissions compliance; Permission granted by CARB Enforcement Division;

Appendix C: Additional Water Quality Efforts

The Colorado River Basin Water Board's water quality monitoring consists of monthly sampling events at the International Boundary in Calexico to study and record water quality changes. Key constituents include pathogens, ammonia as nitrogen, total Kjeldahl nitrogen, total phosphorous, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), arsenic, and selenium. Sampling results are available at [New River Water Quality Data | Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board](#).

Multiple raw sewage discharges into the New River occurred in Mexicali, Baja California in 2025. The Colorado River Basin Water Board was informed of a discharge into the New River of approximately 779,836 gallons resulting from a rain event on January 9, 2025. In February 2025, approximately 66 million gallons of raw sewage were discharged into the New River due to collapsed infrastructure. The Colorado River Basin Water Board received a notification of a raw sewage discharge scheduled on August 29, 2025. The scheduled event allowed the installation of equipment and resulted in 678,922 gallons of raw sewage discharge. Due to heavy rains, approximately 231 million gallons of raw sewage were discharged into the New River in September 2025. From November 15, 2025 through November 23, 2025, approximately 82 million gallons of raw sewage were discharged into the New River. CESPM bypassed raw sewage into the New River to protect the sanitation system infrastructure during a rain event. In December 2025, approximately 38 million gallons were discharged into the New River.

The Lower Tijuana River Indicator Bacteria and Trash ARP is centered on the expectation that USIBWC and EPA will implement the core and supplemental projects identified in the [June 9, 2023, USIBWC-EPA Joint Record of Decision](#) to significantly reduce indicator bacteria and trash loading in the lower Tijuana River.

In 2025, the San Diego Water Board Wetland and Riparian Protection Unit issued two Notices of Applicability for dredge and fill activities in the Tijuana River watershed and issued one staff enforcement letter related to an unauthorized fill event at Saturn Boulevard that occurred in December 2024.

Appendix D: Additional Hazardous Waste Efforts



Figure 1. California-Mexico Land Ports of Entry

During 2025, there were more than 2,240 trucks inspected (See Table 1, Table 2 and Figure 2). Six Summary of Violations were issued to importers of record and/or transporters. There was 1 ongoing enforcement action and 1 settled enforcement case (See Enforcement section).

DTSC staff has ongoing direct communication with Mexico's Procuraduria Federal de Proteccion Ambiental (PROFEPA), (SEMARNAT) officials to obtain information on facilities operating south of the border that are importing hazardous waste and electronic waste from California. This open communication is essential for investigations and enforcement activities.

DTSC plans, organizes and implements trainings regarding the import and export requirements for representatives from maquiladoras (export-oriented manufacturing and assembly plants), Mexican government officials, industry, and nongovernmental agencies. DTSC provided two workshops in the Spring and Fall of 2025 to provide the public, regulated community and regulators with information on hazardous waste management, hazardous materials management and sustainable materials.

DTSC also provides support to USCBP on special projects related to imports and exports of hazardous waste and materials.

Enforcement

On July 15, 2025, the DTSC and Unipol Group Holdings LLC, No EPA ID No, settled an enforcement case in the amount of \$16,800.00. The penalty resolved violations discovered during a northbound border truck stop inspection at the Calexico East Port of Entry on June 14, 2024. The violations cited were for: 1. Failure to make a hazardous waste determination. 2. Failure to prepare a hazardous waste manifest before hazardous waste is transported off-site. 3. Failure to properly mark each container holding hazardous waste. 4. Failure to transfer custody of hazardous waste only to transporters holding a valid hazardous waste transporter registration issued by DTSC.

2025 Data on Trucks Inspected, Waste Types and Quantities, Materials Imported and Destination Facilities

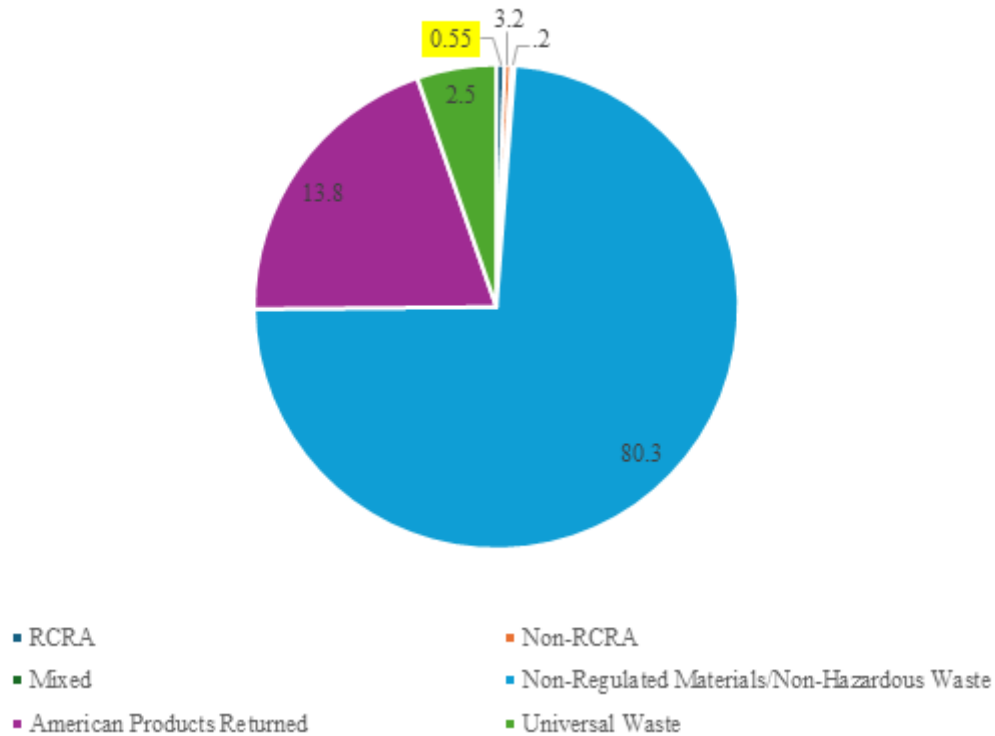
Table 1. Total Number of Trucks Inspected for Otay Mesa and Calexico East Ports of Entry	
Type of Material Imported	# of Trucks
RCRA Waste	72
Non-RCRA Waste	5
Hazardous Materials	1,798
American Products Returned (HazMat)	310
Universal Waste	55
Total	2,240

RCRA: Refers to Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (also known as federal hazardous waste).

Non-RCRA: Refers to California only hazardous waste.

Table 2. Waste Type for Otay Mesa and Calexico East Ports of Entry			
Waste Type	RCRA	Non-RCRA	Total (LBS)
Solid Toxic	8,777,010	580,831	9,357,841
Solid Flammable	22,975	0	22,975
Solid Corrosive	99,892	97,920	197,813
Solid Reactive	2,619	0	2,619
Liquid Toxic	221,973	175,190	397,164
Liquid Flammable	7,407	1,895	9,303
Liquid Corrosive	1,351,524	881	1,352,406
Total	10,483,403	856,720	11,340,125

Figure 2. Type of Material Imported 2025 (%)



Destination Facilities

Manifest tracking information for 2025 included the following destination facilities of transboundary movements from Mexico into the United States from Calexico East and Otay Mesa Ports of Entry.

Table 3. Destination Facilities for Imports of Hazardous Waste	
Facility Name	Facility Identification Number
American Iron and Metal Inc.	RID987474269
Ecobat resources California	CAD066233966
Gannon and Scott Phoenix Inc.	AZD980695332
HVF Precious Metals	AZT050010685
Metallix Refining Inc.	NCD095119210
Phibro-Tech Inc.	CAD008488025
US Ecology Nevada	NVT330010000
World Resources Co.	AZD980735500

Table 4. Registered Hazardous Waste Transporters for Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste	
Hazardous Waste Transporter Name	Hazardous Waste Transporter Identification Number
Hazardous Materials Transportation Inc.	CAR000183822
Mina International Group	CAR000253401
Trimsa USA Inc.	CAR000163824
VLS San Diego	CAR000327627

Table 5. Importers of Hazardous Waste	
Name of Importer	Importer Identification Number
Envirocon International	TXR000085023
Leach International	CAD000626812
Mina International Group	CAR000253401
Phibro-Tech Inc.	CAD008488025
Samex Environmental Services	CAR000266833
VLS San Diego	CAR000327627

Table 6. Destination Facility Quantities for Otay Mesa and Calexico East Ports of Entry			
Facility (Destination)	RCRA	Non-RCRA	Total (LBS)
Ecobat Resources California	5,998,951	0	5,998,951
US Ecology Nevada	1,384,566	846,063	2,230,629
World Resources Company	1,013,481	0	1,013,481
Phibro-Tech	470,058	0	470,058
Gannon and Scott Phoenix Inc.	144,107	10,008	154,116
Metallix Refining Inc.	119,045	0	119,045
American Iron and Metal Inc.	2,187	0	2,187
Abington Reldan Metals	1,715	0	1,715
Total	9,134,112	856,072	9,990,184

Appendix E: Safety and Emergency Management Efforts

Appendix E.1 - Operation Stonegarden El Centro Sector Participants:

- 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 E.2 - Operation Stonegarden San Diego Sector Participants:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| • Chula Vista Police Department | • El Cajon Police Department |
| • Escondido Police Department | • Carlsbad 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
- Newport Beach Police Department
- San Diego 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 Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- Laguna Beach Police Department
- Seal Beach Police Department
- Orange County Sheriff's Department
- California Highway Patrol

Appendix E.3 - 2025 Operation Stonegarden El Centro Sector Statistics	
Mileage	346,308
Overtime Hours	31,977
Vehicle Stops	17,150
Citations	8,906
Arrests	363
Cocaine (kg)	287.16
Methamphetamines (kg)	140.32
Heroin (kg)	87.91
Fentanyl (kg)	28.06
Marijuana (kg)	1,157
Currency Seized	\$361,549
Firearms Seized	40

Appendix E.4 - 2025 Operation Stonegarden San Diego Sector Statistics	
Mileage	598,011
Overtime hours	71,199
Vehicle Stops	13,695
Citations	968
Arrests	803
Narcotic Seizures	341
Marijuana (kg)	178
Cocaine (kg)	1,124
Methamphetamines (kg)	1,807
Heroin (kg)	88
Fentanyl (kg)	283
Currency Seized	\$3,047,486
Firearms Seized	149

Appendix E.5 - 2025 Operation Hourglass Statistics	
Cocaine Seized (kg)	177.25
Fentanyl (kg)	46.98
Heroin Seized (kg)	6.29
Firearms Seized	2
Currency Seized	\$363,520
Arrests	21

Appendix E.6 - 2025 Operation Gridlock Statistics	
Cocaine Seized (kg)	138.1
Fentanyl Seized (kg)	35.85
Methamphetamines Seized (kg)	93.41
Heroin Seized (kg)	0.55
Currency Seized	\$500,000
Arrests	9