

U.S.-Mexico Border 2025: January 2022 Newsletter

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News from the San Diego Border Office



On behalf of the Border 2025 Program, we hope your family, friends and community are safe and well. The Border program has been very busy. In December, EPA presented at the California-Mexico Border Relations Council, Border 2025's regional work groups in California – Baja California and Arizona -Sonora met to discuss the program, task forces and priorities for States and Federally recognized Tribes and EPA Administrator Michael Regan and U.S. Ambassador of Mexico Ken Salazar meet with Mexican counterparts to address transboundary water pollution in the Tijuana

watershed in a bilateral collaboration process. To find out more please see this EPA [press release](#). For upcoming Border 2025 meetings such as the Arizona/Sonora Border Region Air Task Force visit this [link](#).

This past year we have seen how Climate Change has influenced and shifted seasonal [events](#), which can influence extreme heat events, wildfires, vector-borne diseases, pollen seasons, water-borne illnesses and crops. Throughout the Border 2025 program we plan to have climate change and environmental justice focused sessions, please reach out to our program team with ideas or topics you'd like to learn more about.

I am delighted to [share](#), the new Regional Administrator, Martha Guzman joined Region 9. Guzman previously served as a Commissioner at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the last five years, appointed by Governor Jerry Brown. Guzman's portfolio includes leadership on issues related to fiscal oversight of utilities, broadband for all, water affordability, increasing access to clean energy programs and preventing disconnections of basic utilities for disadvantaged communities. Earlier in her career, she was the Sustainable Communities program director for the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation where she worked for Swanton Berry Farm on human resource issues. Guzman started her career as the legislative coordinator for the United Farm Workers. Welcome Regional Administrator Guzman!



Stay well and I look forward to working together in 2022,

Melissa Dimas

Director of the San Diego Border Office
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Signing of the EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once-in-a-generation investment that will create millions of jobs modernizing our infrastructure, turn the climate crisis into an opportunity, and put us on a path to win the economic competition for the 21st century.

President Biden and a bipartisan coalition in Congress worked to finally make good on the promise of “Infrastructure Week” for American communities. As a result of this legislation, EPA will be investing more than \$60 billion in the health, equity, and resilience of American communities.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes:

More than \$50 billion to improve our nation’s drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.

- This is the largest federal investment in water infrastructure in our nation’s history.
- There are still 6 to 10 million lead services lines in cities and towns across the country, many of which are in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. Because of the investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, millions of American families will no longer have to fear the harmful health effects caused by lead and other pollutants in their water.
- National treasures and economic engines like the Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes, and Puget Sound, will be better protected.

More than \$5 billion for cleaning up longstanding pollution in communities.

- More than one in four Black and Hispanic Americans live within 3 miles of a Superfund site. With this funding, communities living near many of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned releases of contamination will finally get the protections they deserve.
- Blighted and polluted sites in communities across America will be assessed, cleaned up and made available for safe reuse, spurring job creation and economic opportunity in areas that need it most.

\$5 billion for decarbonizing the nation’s school bus fleet.

- More than 25 million children ride the bus to school each day, many breathing polluted air from diesel school buses.
- By deploying electric and lower emission school buses, fewer children will face increased asthma risks and other health problems linked to diesel air pollution.

\$100 million for the Pollution Prevention (P2) Program and the launch of a new program targeting environmental justice.

- More businesses will be able to get assistance to reduce toxic pollutants, cut water usage, improve efficiency, and lower costs, which will improve their operations while better protecting the communities in which they operate.

In the coming weeks and months, EPA will be sharing more information on the critical resources in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, how they will improve communities, and how the public can get involved. Find more information here: <https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure>.

Projects and Events in the Border Region

[Diesel Emissions Reduction Act \(DERA\) Funding for Updated Buses in Maricopa County](#)

Maricopa County Air Quality Department (MCAQD) was awarded an [EPA DERA grant](#) for \$525,392 to replace six old diesel school buses with model year 2021 alternative fuel buses, one old diesel school bus with a model year 2021 battery-electric bus, and nine old diesel trucks with model year 2021 diesel trucks. These projects will be implemented through a partnership between MCAQD, Yuma Union High School District, Madison School District, Sysco Foods, and White Water II, LLC. The funds will be combined with \$350,261 in matching funds from MCAQD, and \$1,745,550 in leveraged funds from public and private partners.

New Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS) Grant in the Border Region

EPA announced \$14.1 million in environmental justice (EJ) for 133 grants selected through the Environmental Justice Small Grants (EJSG) and Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement (EJCPS) programs. The majority of these EJ grants are receiving funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP). More information in the press release [here](#).

In the Border region, Vista Community Clinic (VCC) was awarded a EJCPS grant to update and modernize an existing farmworker-specific emergency response plan in San Diego County and to design and deliver a curriculum to train farmworkers on emergency preparedness, as well as wildfire and COVID-19 risk mitigation. Farmworkers in San Diego County, California are often exploited for cheap labor, and many face significant insecurity due to their lack of legal immigration status. The targeted underserved population of farmworkers is predominantly Latinx (82.1%), uninsured (35.9%), and living 200% below the federal poverty line (96.6%). This population also faces significant housing insecurity, limited access to clean water, insufficient nutritional access, exposure to pesticides, and increased elemental exposure including heat, sun, cold, rain, as well as persistence of health conditions such as respiratory issues, diabetes, and hypertension.

The Planning for the Road Ahead program aims to first conduct a needs-based assessment for the farmworker population in order to design health education tools used to train Promotoras (CHWs) for the dissemination of a farmworker-specific emergency response plan that also addresses wildfire risks, healthcare access, farmworker-specific health disparities, and COVID-19. Trainings will be conducted locally as well as nationally using online workshops. The effectiveness of training and education materials will be evaluated based on documentation of completion of curricula, how many communities use the workshop to develop their own EPP, and survey data collected from workshop participants on their satisfaction after training. This program/project is geared for Southern California farmworkers, farmworkers around the U.S., and Promotoras that oversee the health and safety of the workers.

For questions reach out to oneil.boone@epa.gov

EPA and DTSC Host Cross-border Hazardous Waste Workshop

On December 7, 2021, via Zoom, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) hosted a hazardous waste workshop attended by stakeholders in the California- Baja California border region. DTSC presented on hazardous waste classification and excluded recyclable material, while EPA presented on transboundary movement of plastic waste and recyclable exclusions under the Basel Convention, and the Federal Department of Transportation spoke about hazardous materials transporter regulations. About 50 people attended the all-day workshop, including shippers, customs personnel, customs brokers, truck drivers/companies, recyclers, universities, environmental consultants, PROFEPA (Mexico's regulation agency), and federal/state/county agencies from both sides of the border. EPA and DTSC intend to host another hazardous waste workshop in summer 2022



New Food Waste Management Rules in Effect across the state of California

As part of its efforts to reduce global warming, as of January 1, 2022, the state of California enacted rules requiring the population to divert its food scraps from landfill. According to CalRecycle, organic waste in landfills emits 20% of the state's methane, a climate pollutant 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Under Senate Bill 1383 (dubbed *California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy*), jurisdictions must meet the following goals by 2025: 1) Reduce organic waste disposal by 75% (from 2014 as a baseline), and 2) Rescue & donate at least 20% of currently disposed surplus food. Cities, counties, and special districts, including those along the U.S. border with Mexico, need to provide organic waste collection services to residents and businesses, and recycle those organic materials through anaerobic digestion or composting. As of January 1st, 2022, non-compliant jurisdictions could get fined up to \$10,000 per day. Additionally, now some food service businesses must donate edible food to food recovery organizations, with others starting in 2024. This will help feed the almost 1 in 4 Californians without enough to eat. For more info about SB 1383, visit <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp>.



Upcoming Meetings and Webinars

Please join EPA and Border 2025 program partners at various upcoming meetings in the border region. All meetings during this time are virtual due to COVID-19 challenges and will include simultaneous interpretation in English and Spanish. See the Border 2025 calendar for more information and meeting updates: <https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/region-9-calendar>

Upcoming Border 2025 Meetings

Arizona-Sonora Air Task Force Virtual Meeting

- February 10, 2022: 10-11:30 AM (Mountain time)
- Meeting information [here](#).

Other Meetings of Interest

White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC) Public Meeting

The WHEJAC will hold a two-day public meeting **January 26-27, 2021** from approximately **3:00 - 7:30 PM (ET)** each day. Individual registration is **REQUIRED**. [Register for the January 26-27, 2022 Public Meeting](#)

The public encouraged to provide comments relevant to the specific issues being considered by WHEJAC that include potential solutions and recommendations. To learn more about the WHEJAC, visit [this](#) link. For questions, please contact Karen L. Martin at whejac@epa.gov or 202-564-0203.

Next National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Call: January 25, 2022

EPA invites Environmental Justice (EJ) advocates to participate in the next [National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Call](#) taking place on **January 25, 2022 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. (ET)**. These calls are free and open to the public. Register [here](#).

The purpose of these calls is to inform the community and other stakeholders about EPA's EJ work and enhance opportunities to maintain an open dialogue with EJ advocates. This call will touch on upcoming grant funding and technical assistance as well as regional listening sessions on a draft strategy to address lead exposures and disparities in communities. Recordings and meeting materials for all calls are posted at this [link](#). For more information e-mail Robinson.Victoria@epa.gov or Motilall.Christina@epa.gov.

New Superfund Redevelopment Mapper Tool and Training Webinar

EPA is excited to announce the launch of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [Superfund Redevelopment Mapper](#), a new GIS-based tool to help local, state and tribal governments, community development organizations, developers and community members explore reusing and redeveloping land on or near Superfund sites.

Superfund Redevelopment Mapper Training Webinar: January 26, 2022 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm EST; Register here: <https://clu-in.org/conf/tio/superfund-redevelopment/>

National Radon Action Month

January marks the beginning of National Radon Action Month, a time of year EPA highlights the national recommendation that everyone test their home for [radon](#). ([radón](#) en español). Radon is an odorless, colorless, radioactive gas that, when left untreated, can build up inside a home. Over time, exposure to radon can cause lung cancer. Millions of homes in the United States have elevated levels of radon. Inhaling radon damages lung cells and kills approximately 21,000 people annually, making radon the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. Affordable do-it-yourself radon test kits are available online and at most home improvement and hardware stores. You can also hire a qualified radon professional to test your home. Tens of millions of homes have already been tested, and millions of homes with high radon levels have been fixed. If your home isn't one of these, start 2022 off right by testing your home for radon. [Learn more about radon at this link.](#)





Registration is now open for the [Advancing Environmental Health Equity through Implementation Science Virtual Workshop](#) February 28 - March 1, 2022

Our environment, including exposures in the physical, built, and social environments, can negatively affect the health of individuals and communities. These environmental exposures disproportionately impact racial and ethnic minority groups, disadvantaged and under-resourced communities. Given the interconnectedness of the environment with individual- and structural-level social determinants of health, ensuring equitable implementation of interventions, programs, and policies that prevent or mitigate these environmental exposures is urgently needed. Implementation science is the study of methods to promote the adoption and integration of evidence-based interventions, programs, and policies into community, public health, and clinical settings. The purpose of this workshop is to explore how environmental health scientists can use implementation science to inform the development, adaptation, implementation and scale-up of interventions, practices, and policies to prevent and/or mitigate potentially harmful environmental exposures and ultimately advance environmental health equity. The workshop is free and open to the public. To learn more visit this [link](#).

This workshop is sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Cancer Institute, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute of Mental Health, Fogarty International Center, Office of Disease Prevention, and National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities

Grant Opportunities

[EPA Region 9 Environmental Youth and Teacher Awards for 2021-22](#)

Do you know any outstanding Kindergarten through 12th grade teachers or youth working to promote environmental literacy and stewardship? If so, encourage them to apply to the USEPA's youth and teacher awards by February 18, 2022:

- The [President's Environmental Youth Award \(PEYA\)](#) has two parts, a regional award for grades K-5 and a regional award for grades 6-12. Each year the program honors environmental projects developed by young individuals, school classes, summer camps, and youth organizations.
- The [Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators \(PIAEE\)](#) recognizes accomplished K-12 teachers who use innovative approaches to engage their students in environmental education.

[Grant Opportunity: \\$20 Million for Unserved Community Air Pollution Monitoring](#)

Historic amount of funding for community air monitoring is now available in the U.S. EPA anticipates awarding 50-70 grants or cooperative agreements, with a mix of small \$25,000 - \$100,000 and large grants \$100,001-\$500,000. Funding comes from the [American Rescue Plan](#), to address ambient air monitoring in communities with health outcome disparities from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eligible projects support/develop/establish ambient air monitoring of pollutants in communities with environmental and health outcome disparities stemming from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications must address one or more of the following air pollutants: particle pollution (ultrafine, PM2.5, or PM10), hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, criteria air pollutant precursor(s).

Eligible entities: States (including the District of Columbia); local governments; U.S. territories and possessions; Indian tribes; and community-based, nonprofit organizations.

Deadline: February 25, 2022 @ 11:59 eastern at www.grants.gov. For tips and more information on how to apply through Grants.gov, visit the [EPA Grants page](#). Submit questions via e-mail to, AirMonitoring@epa.gov, before February 18, 2022. Question/Answer document updated weekly at this [link](#), so applicants are encouraged to check back regularly.

Visit EPA's website [here](#) for grant details or view [this](#) press release.



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