

## U.S.-Mexico Border 2025 Newsletter: Fall 2022

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### News from the San Diego Border Office



Greetings! My name is Jeremy Bauer, and I am the new Director of EPA's San Diego Border Office. In this role, I will oversee EPA's Border 2025 activities in California, Baja California, Arizona, and Sonora and EPA's field office in San Diego.

While this is a new role for me, border issues are not. In fact, a prior opportunity to support the U.S.-Mexico Environmental program (Border 2020 at the time) is what initially drew me to take a position with EPA Region 9 in San Diego more than 7 years ago. Before coming to Region 9, I had the opportunity to address binational water quality issues with an architecture and engineering firm in San Diego, and worked eight years with U.S. EPA headquarters in the Office of Water in Washington, DC prior to that. Most recently, I served in various management roles in EPA Region 9's Tribal, Intergovernmental, and Policy Division in San Francisco but am now back in San Diego. Before joining EPA, I served two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nicaragua. I'm an environmental engineer by education, with a bachelor's degree in environmental geosciences from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in environmental engineering from Virginia Tech.

I strongly believe in the mission of the U.S.-Mexico Border program, to collaborate binationally to advance environmental protection and public health and I intend to leverage my 20 years of experience in the environmental sector to benefit this program and the communities we serve. As I begin this new role, I look forward to getting reacquainted with those I worked with before and meeting new faces as well.

I'm pleased to share this latest issue of our newsletter highlighting recent efforts and upcoming opportunities. Thank you for reading and always feel welcome to reach out.

**Excited to join back with the U.S.-MX Border Team once again,**

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

### Recent Events

## Signing of Statement of Intent (SOI) and Minute 328 between U.S.-MX

On August 18, 2022, EPA, CONAGUA, and the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) [celebrated two new binational agreements](#) in Imperial Beach, CA. The [Statement of Intent](#) and [Minute 328](#) outline sanitation projects to be constructed in San Diego and Tijuana with a \$330 million dollar contribution from the U.S. government and \$144 million dollar contribution from the Mexican government.

The list of projects for implementation includes doubling the capacity of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in the U.S. and constructing a new treatment plant in Mexico at San Antonio de los Buenos.

With these two projects, the amount of Mexican sewage undergoing treatment in the region will increase by 43 million gallons per day, reducing sewage in both the Tijuana River and the Pacific Ocean. Other projects include rehabilitation or replacement of deteriorated sewer lines and pump stations in Tijuana to reduce line breaks and pump failures that result in sewage spills to the Tijuana River, thus improving water quality.



Government representatives from the United States and Mexico gathered at the Tijuana River Estuary for the signing ceremony.



EPA's Deputy Assistant Administrator Bruno Pigott (left) and CONAGUA Manager Jose Gutierrez (right) sign the Statement of Intent.

## Binational Waste and Materials Management Workshop

On June 8th, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), EPA and the Baja CA Secretariat of the Environment & Sustainable Development (SMADS) held a workshop for U.S.-Mexico cross-border shippers of hazardous waste, as well as importers/exporters, brokers, recyclers, inspectors and government. The two government agencies shared welcoming remarks to nearly 50 participants.

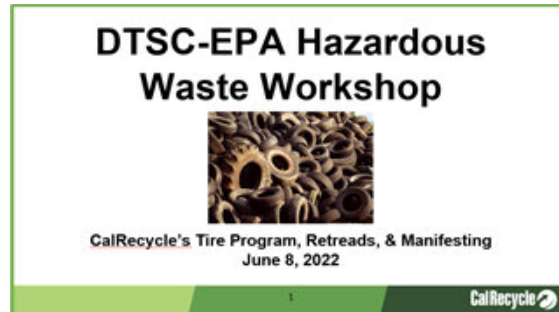
The audience learned about management of used catalytic converters, import/export of both [universal](#) and electronic waste, EPA's regulated imports, and SMADS's regulations for 'specially managed waste'. CalRecycle presented its retread tire program and managing waste tires along the border.

“We’re proud to collaborate with EPA to provide quality workshops addressing important regulatory topics. We seek to increase environmental compliance and uphold the mission to protect human health and the environment”, said Carlo Rodríguez, Supervisory Environmental Scientist at DTSC.

If you’d like to attend the next workshop, send an email to [Carlo.Rodriguez@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:Carlo.Rodriguez@dtsc.ca.gov).



Presentation from SMADS



Presentation from CalRecycle

## Regional Tribal Operations Committee Meeting

On July 28, the Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC), Border Workgroup held a meeting, co-chaired by Camilo Perez, Pesticide Director for Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe and Emily Pimentel, Border 2025 Program and Tribal Coordinator, US EPA, with two key presentations.

Shelly Barnes, *Customs and Border Protection* presented “Border Wall Updates” covering the “Border Wall Plan” July 2022 amendments to redirect barrier funds for environmental remediation and mitigation and the installation of system attributes in places with previously built barrier and public outreach held for these [CBP Projects](#) in 2022.

The projects prioritize funding to address life and safety and avert further environmental damage or degradation. CBP is working with the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to fund tribal cultural monitors and working closely with the Tohono O’odham Nation and the Kumeyaay Tribe on projects in San Diego, El Centro, and Tucson Sectors.



Michael Wilken, [Border Initiative](#) presented on “Mexican Indigenous Engagement in Climate Actions” based on attending the 2022 Southwestern Tribal Climate Change Summit (reported in the Spring newsletter). He noted “transmission of tribal knowledges transcends border” and the interest among Mexican indigenous communities for facilitating this. He recommended support be available for this under the Border 2025 Program, working with Mexico’s Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas

Traditional lands in Baja California Mexico  
(Photo credit: Michael Wilken)

(INPI, in English the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples).

## Upcoming Meetings and Webinars

Please join EPA and Border 2025 program partners at various upcoming meetings in the border region. Meetings during this time are virtual or hybrid 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>

### Meetings



### Climate Justice Youth Forum: Imperial Valley-Mexicali Region

**Date: Friday, Sep 23, 2022**  
**Time: 9:30 AM-5:00 AM Pacific**

On September 23, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [US-Mexico Border Program](#) and [Environmental Justice Program](#), in collaboration with the [North American Development Bank](#) (NADB), are hosting for the first time a Climate Justice Youth Forum in the Mexicali-Imperial county region.

Through this event, we will convene young leaders ages 18-27 from the Imperial/Mexicali region who have been or would like to become active in the climate justice space to develop leadership, gain knowledge on climate change and environmental justice, and network with community leaders and professionals. Applications for participation in this event were required by August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, but EPA plans to host similar events in the future.

For more information or questions, contact Mario Zuniga at [zuniga.mario@epa.gov](mailto:zuniga.mario@epa.gov).

### Ambientalízate: Imperial/Mexicali Binational Air Quality Summit

**Date: Sep 27-28, 2022**

Organized by the Imperial-Mexicali Air Quality Task Force (TF), this two-day binational summit to discuss air quality issues, ongoing activities and brainstorm solutions to issues. The intended participants are the air quality TF members, Government (USA and Mexico), Industry, Small Business, Academia, NGOs, Media, local Binational groups, and limited participation of the community at large as space allows.

- Location: Convention Center of the Araiza Inn Hotel, Mexicali
- More Information: [www.ambientalize.org](http://www.ambientalize.org)
- Questions? Contact [aqtf@ambientalize.org](mailto:aqtf@ambientalize.org)

### Arizona/Sonora Regional Taskforce Meetings

Date: Oct 6, 2022  
Time: 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM (MT)

Join us at the [Arizona-Sonora Regional Workgroup Task Force Meetings](#) to learn more about on-going projects, activities, and upcoming milestones of the *Border 2025: U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program*. **These meetings will be held in-person and virtually (hybrid) for better participation.**

Task force meetings will focus on the following strategic Border 2025 goals:

- Reduce Air Pollution
- Improve Water Quality
- Promote Sustainable Materials and Waste Management, and Clean Sites
- Improve Joint Preparedness for and Response to Hazardous Environmental Emergencies

**Note:** There will be an environmental health session including a discussion on air quality and asthma. Please let us know if there are additional environmental health topics you would like to discuss.

**Location:** To Be Determined - City in Southern Arizona. Virtual meeting link will be shared at a future date.

**Time:** 8:30 AM- 4:00 PM

**Border 2025 Contact:** Lorena Lopez-Powers [Lopez-Powers.Lorena@epa.gov](mailto:Lopez-Powers.Lorena@epa.gov)

### Webinars



**Don't Miss the Webinar:**  
*Innovations in Financing Environmental Asthma Home Visits Within Medicaid*



Hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
Tuesday, September 13, 2022  
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. EDT

[REGISTER](#)

**Attend this webinar to hear experts from California share information about—**

- Technical solutions that state health care policymakers and community partners are pioneering to improve asthma outcomes, reduce health disparities and cultivate health equity.
- Innovations to address indoor environmental determinants of health (IEDOH) through clinic and community integration, such as asthma home visits with environmental interventions for children who need them for asthma control.
- Ways to collaborate between health care, public health, housing, community development, energy and others to put the latest IEDOH policies and science to work to improve asthma.

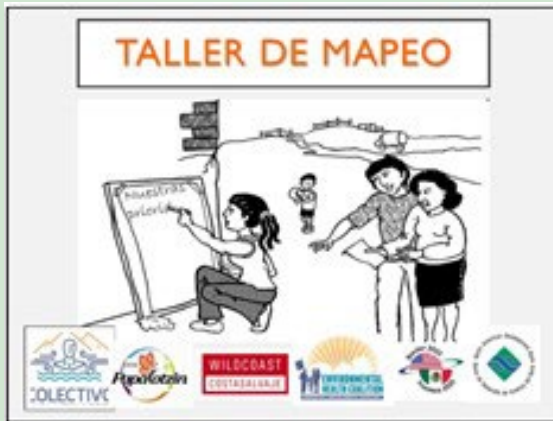
Contact Us

Do you have questions?

Email: [EPAAsthmaProgram@asthmacommunitynetwork.org](mailto:EPAAsthmaProgram@asthmacommunitynetwork.org)

## Waste Updates

### Progress on Alamar River Community Clean-Up and Conservation Efforts



Top: Map of Clean-Up Day at Alamar River

Left: Mapping Project Workshop

Border 2025's grantee Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) is making headway in its *Waste Analysis and Socio-Environmental Vulnerability* study along the Alamar River in Tijuana.

Recently, EHC and its partners engaged over 100 volunteers, including U.S. and Mexican public officials, in a 'Clean-up Day' for the forested area of the river. They collected and classified ½ metric ton (1,000 kilos / 2,205 lbs, the weight of four adult male polar bears) of trash/materials in nine categories. "The Tijuana community that responded to the call to

clean up the Alamar river took an important step forward, thus helping reconstruct our societal fabric. It was a bittersweet moment, since the majority of us joined forces to pick up trash by hand,” said Magdalena Cerda, Border Environmental Justice Policy Advocate of EHC.

EHC is using GPS to map and classify illegal trash burning sites, dumps and wastewater runoff in neighborhoods adjacent to the river. This will later lead to an environmental plan for the area, ultimately benefiting the bi-national Tijuana River watershed.

If you have questions about the project reach out to [villasenor.andre@epa.gov](mailto:villasenor.andre@epa.gov).

## Air Updates

### Community Health through Cleaner Air: The Story of the Salton Sea

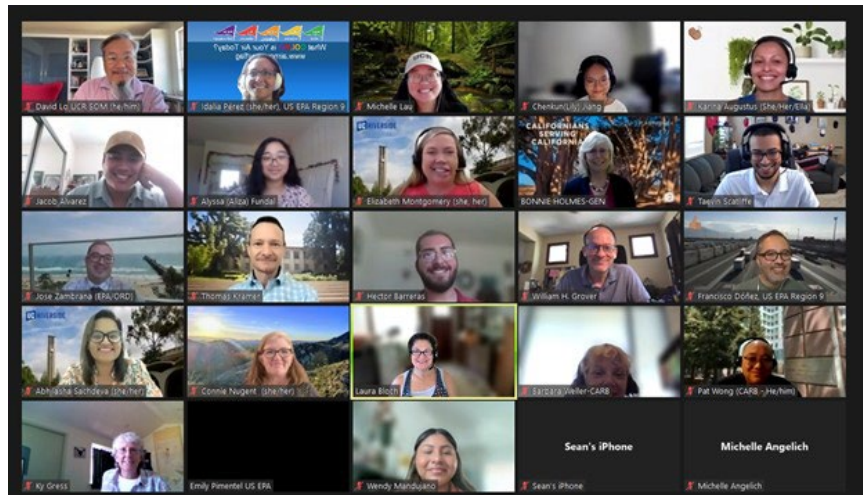
From July 26 to August 25 of 2022, EPA partnered with the University of California Riverside (UCR) for the third year on the “Bridging the Gap from Education to Employment” (BGEE) internship program. This internship was conducted as part of the five-year memorandum of understanding to support recruitment, education, and outreach between EPA Region 9 and UCR, originally signed in 2008, and renewed for the third time in 2018. This year, the internship also collaborated with the California Air Resources Board (CARB).



The BGEE program aims to develop undergraduate student’s career skills and experience, particularly low-income and first-generation students. The internship includes a personal development and technical track. This year’s student cohort worked on a community project called “Community Health through Cleaner Air: The Story of the Salton Sea.” Over the 5-week internship, the students explored three dimensions of the Salton Sea:

- Environmental and ecosystem health
- Human health, and the intersection between air quality and health disparities
- Environmental justice and community action

The students' final deliverable was a set of recommendations for how the government can support the diverse needs of Salton Sea stakeholders, which included ideas for additional outreach and engagement to communities and possible technical solutions to decrease windblown dust.



The interns along with UCR, CARB and EPA staff during the final presentation



# October is Children's Health Month

## October - Binational Health and Children's Health Month

Children's health is every day, but in October we like to highlight and prioritize children's health outreach. In particular within the border region due to binational health month we also strive to share resources in Spanish.

**Tips to keep your family healthy and safe!**



- **Prevent Poisoning** Store pesticides and other household chemicals where your children can't reach them, and never put them in other containers that kids can mistake for food or drink.  
Visit: [www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/reduce-your-childs-chances-pesticide-poisoning](http://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/reduce-your-childs-chances-pesticide-poisoning)
- **Find Safer Choice Products:** Find products that meet the Safer Choice criteria for children, school staff, and the environment. When you see a product with the Safer Choice label, it means that every ingredient in the product has been evaluated by EPA scientists.  
Visit: [www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-10/documents/saferchoice-factsheet-schools.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-10/documents/saferchoice-factsheet-schools.pdf)
- **Get Your Child Tested for Lead:** Have your child tested for lead by your health care provider or your local health department.  
Visit: [www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead#protect](http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead#protect)
- **Protect Children from Lead-Based Paint:** If you live in a home built before 1978, use certified renovators who are trained by EPA-approved training providers and follow lead-safe work practices.  
Visit: [www.epa.gov/lead/lead-renovation-repair-and-painting-program](http://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-renovation-repair-and-painting-program)
- **Reduce Risks from Lead in Drinking Water:** Run water until it becomes cold. Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making formula. Visit: [www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water#reducehome](http://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water#reducehome)

For more tips, visit: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/documents/childrenshealthoct2020\\_eng-2.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/documents/childrenshealthoct2020_eng-2.pdf)

### [Border 2025 Action Plans for 2021-2023 are Now Available Online](#)



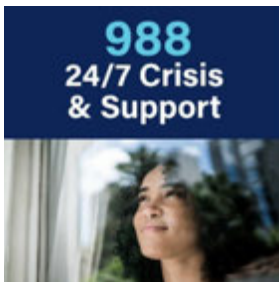
The Border 2025 Action Plans provide a summary of projects and efforts that are ongoing and funded in U.S.-Mexico border and tribal communities.

The 2021-2023 Action Plans also track concrete activities, timeframes, and outputs and outcomes that fulfill the goals and objectives of the Border 2025 Program.

Overall, the Action Plans align resources towards improving the environmental and public health of residents living along the border region.

The 2021-2023 Action Plans are now available online. See the following [link](#) for the Action Plans both in English and Spanish for the Arizona/Sonora (AZ-SN) and California/Baja California (CA-BC) border region.

*Note: If you have any questions/comments on these, please contact [Lorena López Powers](#) (AZ-SN) or [Emily Pimentel](#) (CA-BC).*



## **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**

The easy-to-remember 3-digit 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number is now live in the U.S. If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org). 988 connects you with a trained crisis counselor who can help.

## **Grant Opportunities**

### **EPA Announces Initial Availability of \$11 Million for Technical Assistance Centers to Support Underserved Communities**

*Up to \$50 Million in Multi-Year Grants Available to Applicants Under Future Phases in Partnership with Department of Energy*

**Deadline October 4**

On August 8, EPA announced the availability of \$11 million in grant funding to establish Environmental Justice (EJ) Thriving Community Technical Assistance Centers across the nation.

The Centers will provide an unprecedented level of support to help ensure that federal resources are equitably distributed and meet the on-the-ground environmental justice challenges that communities have faced for generations.

They will also provide technical assistance, training, and capacity-building support to communities with EJ concerns and their partners. They plan to help communities navigate federal systems such as [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), effectively managing and leveraging grant funding, and improve meaningful engagement through the provision of translation and interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants.

This program will coordinate with and complement the Department of Transportation's Thriving Communities Initiative that provides technical assistance and capacity building resources to improve and foster thriving communities through transportation improvements.

Eligible Entities for cooperative agreement grant opportunity: public and private universities and colleges; public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations; and intertribal consortia.

For more information on this opportunity: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers>

For more information on other grant funding and technical assistance: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance>

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