

Draft

BORDER 2025 PROGRAM TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES

April 20, 2022

RTOC Border Workgroup

The new US-Mexico Environmental Program, [Border 2025](#), has involved several engagements and activities with Tribes, States, and Federal governments in the border region to meet the program mission and four goals since it was signed May 2021. Engagement with Tribes in EPA's Pacific Southwest Region (Region 9) has been in several ways.

As the Border 2025 Program nears one year, the program's National Coordinators from US EPA and Mexico's Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) will convene the **National Coordinators Meetings (NCM)** on **May 13 between 10 am and 1:30 pm (PDT)**, see [Registration Link](#) and program [calendar link](#) for Agenda. The NCM meeting is a public meeting to share information and results from the regional, borderwide, and other meetings held. It will also include an environmental justice roundtable and a public question-and-answer session.

Tribal Remarks at the National Coordinators Meeting May 13, 2022

The National Coordinators have requested a Tribal Representative in Region 9 who could provide brief remarks (5 minutes) about the Border 2025 Program. I'm suggesting Jennifer Alspach, Environmental Director for Cocopah since the Cocopah Tribe of Arizona has a Border 2025 grant and she has accepted serving as a Regional Coordinator for the Border 2025 Program. She has tentatively accepted to talk about her experience in the program, but open to others who would like to speak.

Summary of Border 2025 Program Activities

For purposes of understanding what has been accomplished in advance of the NCM meeting, below is a summary of Tribal border program meetings and activities since the launch of the program. The summary addresses program meetings and activities completed or in progress. It does not include the specific comments made at the various meetings; however, EPA has been tracking and working to address these them. Please let me know if there's anything else I should include in this summary.

Improve opportunities for funding tribal projects: The EPA in coordination with the North American Development Bank (NADB) established solicitation criteria to strengthen opportunities for Tribes to compete, and the 2021 solicitation resulted in two tribal projects ([AZ-SN](#) and [CA-Baja CA](#)) out of 8 total projects selected were awarded to Tribes.

Use of GAP funds for border program: In a letter dated December 2022, EPA communicated about eligible activities under the Border program that could be covered with Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) funds.

Participate in Program Coordinating Bodies: Meetings: Tribes have been invited and engaged in the Arizona/Sonora and California/Baja California Regional Workgroups (held December 9, 2021 and January 10, 2022), four Borderwide Policy Workgroups for air, water, waste, and emergency response & preparedness ([program calendar](#)), and in advance of these, several regional Task Force meetings were held.

Participate in Listening Session: The program held a Tribal Listening session on April 7 that provided an additional opportunity for US Federally Recognized Tribes to share issues, concerns, and priorities with the EPA's leadership (Office of International Tribal Affairs and Regional Administrators for the Pacific Southwest (R9) and South-Central Regions (R6)).

Serve as Regional Coordinators: Tribal leaders were asked to serve or designate a person to serve, time permitting, as Regional Coordinators, a program role that serves to assist the regions in identifying program priorities, reporting accomplishments, and recommendations on addressing unmet needs.

Held Climate Action Workshop: In partnership with the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) and EPA Region 9, held a US-Mexico Border Region Climate Action and Capacity Building [Workshop](#) on March 22-23, 2022.

Formed an Tribal Border Workgroup: To facilitate information sharing about the Border 2025 Program and overall border region issues, EPA Region 9's Regional Tribal Operations Committee ([RTOC](#)) established a Border Workgroup in February 2021 co-chaired by Camilo Perez, Pesticide Director, Quechan Tribe and Emily Pimentel, Mexico Border Branch Program Coordinator, US EPA Region 9.

Engagement with Mexican Indigenous Communities: Mexico's federal environmental agency, SEMARNAT facilitated a meeting with the Director of the *Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indigenas* ([INPI](#), in English the National Institute for Indigenous Communities). EPA Region 9 looks forward to opportunities to facilitate engagement of indigenous communities in Baja CA and Sonora in the Border 2025 Program.