

ISSUE SUMMARY:

The United States and EPA have a long history of environmental cooperation with our partners in Canada and Mexico both trilaterally and bilaterally. Trilaterally, the EPA Administrator is the U.S. representative on the Commission for Environmental Protection (CEC), which was established by the 1994 North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and now operates pursuant to the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (the side agreement to the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) free trade agreement.

Bilaterally, EPA and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) maintain longstanding cooperation under the U.S.-Canada Air Quality Agreement and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In addition, EPA works with the State Department to address potential impacts of transboundary pollution along the U.S.-Canada border that have been raised by Congress, states, Tribes, and other stakeholders. EPA is also the U.S. national coordinator on environmental issues along the U.S.-Mexico border under the La Paz Agreement. This includes working with our counterpart in Mexico, SEMARNAT, on the U.S.-Mexico Border Program and representing the U.S. on the Board of Directors for the North American Development Bank.

UPCOMING MILESTONES:

- Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed: EPA's representation in the IJC's newly established Governance Body to identify options for future actions to address transboundary impacts to water quality.
- Tijuana River Watershed: EPA and Mexico are working on projects and capital investments to address transboundary water pollution issues in the San Diego/Tijuana region.
- U.S.-Mexico Border 2025 Program: EPA and SEMARNAT are developing the next Border Environmental Program.
- North American Development Bank: EPA representative to participate at Board of Directors meeting in November.

BACKGROUND:

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was established to mark a commitment by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to work together on pressing regional and global issues related to trade and the environment. The EPA Administrator is the U.S. representative on the CEC Council – the CEC governing body – and chaired the Council from July 2023 to July 2024. Mexico currently chairs the CEC Council. The CEC is funded by equal contributions from the governments of the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and the EPA/OITA budget includes \$2.5 million to support the CEC.

EPA and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) have enjoyed longstanding cooperation on reducing and researching air emissions under the U.S.-Canada Air Quality Agreement and managing water quality under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In addition, EPA works with the State Department to address potential impacts of transboundary pollution in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, and Washington State from large-scale mining in British Columbia. This includes working with tribal governments on a joint reference to the International Joint Commission (IJC) to reduce and mitigate the impacts of water pollution in the Elk-Kootenai watershed.

EPA is the U.S. agency on environmental issues along the U.S.-Mexico border, including addressing water quality issues and water infrastructure needs. EPA has a Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) to fund water infrastructure projects on both sides of the 100 km region north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border that will benefit water quality in the U.S. The North American Development Bank (NADB) finances infrastructure projects along the U.S.-Mexico border and these projects are reviewed and approved by the NADB Board of Directors, which

includes representatives from EPA, Treasury and the State Department. In addition, EPA is the U.S. national coordinator of the U.S.-Mexico Border 2025 Program to address areas of mutual concern, including air, water, waste, and emergency response, along the U.S.-Mexico border.

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

☒ Congress ☒ Industry ☒ States ☒ Tribes ☒ Media ☒ Other Federal Agency
☒ NGO ☒ Local Governments ☐ Other (name of stakeholder) _____

MOVING FORWARD:

Elk-Kootenai Watershed: The International Joint Commission (IJC) has established a Governance Body to develop options for future action to address transboundary impacts of coal mining, and EPA will continue to serve on the Governance Body and inform its work.

Tijuana River Watershed: The USMCA implementing legislation included supplemental funding to EPA for activities related to the construction of high priority wastewater facilities to address international transboundary pollution from Mexico. EPA will continue to convene regular meetings with U.S. stakeholders and Mexican counterparts to track the progress of projects addressing the transboundary wastewater pollution in the short and long term.

U.S.-Mexico Border Program: EPA is working with our counterpart in Mexico, SEMARNAT, on implementing the U.S.-Mexico Border Program (Border 2025) and developing the successor program (Border 2030?) after the current program sunsets in 2025.

North American Development Bank: As a member of the Board of Directors, EPA will continue to review and approve policies, programs and projects that will prevent, control, or reduce environmental pollutants along the US-Mexico border.

Commission for Environmental Cooperation: As the U.S. representative, EPA will continue to work with Canada and Mexico in developing a new Strategic Plan for programs, projects, and activities to address the priorities identified in the USMCA.

LEAD OFFICE/REGION: OITA

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS: OW, OCSPP, OAR, OLEM,
OGC, REGIONS 1,2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10