

Executive Committee
San Diego Association of Governments
October 10, 2025

Borders Report

Binational updates:

U.S. Trade Representative Seeks Public Comment on the Joint Review of USMCA

The United States, Mexico, Canada (USMCA) free trade agreement directly impacts trade flows, tariffs, and regulations between the three countries. On September 17, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) initiated a public consultation process ahead of the joint review of the USMCA, which is scheduled for July 1, 2026. The deadline for submitting comments is November 3, 2025. The USTR will also host a public hearing on November 17, 2025.

In the first half of 2025, Mexico solidified its position as the U.S.'s top trading partner and largest supplier of goods, with exports reaching a record \$264.4 billion. Despite new tariffs, more than 82% of Mexican exports entered the U.S. duty-free under the USMCA.

Tribal updates:

lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel Reclaims 1,107 Acres of Ancestral Land in the San Felipe Valley

Located in northeastern San Diego County, the lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel is a federally recognized Kumeyaay tribe, formerly known as the Santa Ysabel Band of Diegueño Mission Indians. Established in 1893, the tribe's reservation spans more than 15,000 acres.

In August 2025, the tribe, working in partnership with the California Natural Resources Agency, announced the return of 1,107 acres of ancestral land, adjacent to the current reservation, in the nearby San Felipe Valley. The land was returned through California's \$100 million investment in its Tribal Nature-Based Solutions program. As part of the initiative, the tribe will establish the Ewiinally Traditional Ecological Knowledge Center, which will serve as a public educational hub dedicated to sharing and promoting the tribe's ecological knowledge and stewardship practices.

Interregional updates:

OCTA Completes Initial Sand Nourishment to Protect Coastal Rail Line through San Clemente

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has completed its first emergency beach nourishment project at North Beach in San Clemente, placing

approximately 2,500 cubic yards of sand to buffer the coastal rail line against erosion. This effort is part of a larger strategy to protect the rail corridor from unstable bluffs and coastal damage.

In addition to the sand placement, OCTA has begun work on restoring the adjacent pedestrian beach trail and constructing a 1,400-foot catchment wall just south of the nourishment site. This wall will serve as a barrier against potential bluff slides and is part of ongoing emergency stabilization efforts. The sand used in the project was hauled from Palm Springs and approved through environmental review to match natural beach conditions.

OCTA plans to place up to 540,000 cubic yards of sand along San Clemente's beaches as part of its long-term coastal resilience plan. The catchment wall and trail restoration are expected to be completed by next summer.