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Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety
Subcommittee on National Security
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Good afternoon, Chairman DeSantis and the distinguished members of the Subcommittee on National Security. My name is Steven McCraw; I am the Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the vitally important homeland security issue of an unsecured border with Mexico, and the consequences it has had for the state of Texas and our communities.

In an ever-changing threat environment where crime is increasingly transitory, transnational, organized, and discreet, and terrorism has become more disaggregated, an unsecure border with Mexico represents a grave national security vulnerability. As the members of this committee know well, a porous border with Mexico provides Mexican Cartels a reliable means to smuggle people, some of whom are members of transnational gangs, criminal aliens or foreign nationals from countries that are state-sponsors of terrorism and/or have a large presence of terrorist organizations committed to destroying us and our way of life. The Mexican Cartels continue to prey upon young women and children from Central America and Mexico seeking to enter the U.S. illegally, subjecting them to the vilest of deprivations.

Importantly, the Mexican Cartels have exploited the porous U.S./Mexico border to dominate our nation's lucrative illicit drug market, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and now, fentanyl – and Texas has become the drug and human transshipment center for the nation. The opiate crisis that some of the members of this committee have experienced in your districts illustrates the Mexican Cartel's ability to quickly diversify drug smuggling and trafficking operations to quickly become the largest supplier of our nation's heroin – and now fentanyl. For example, over the last decade, Texas State Troopers routinely seized large loads of cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and heroin transported from Mexico, but never large loads of fentanyl – until recently. In less than four months – *in three traffic stops alone* – our State Troopers seized 23.977 kilograms of fentanyl.

According to DEA, “as little as two milligrams [*of fentanyl*] is a lethal dosage in most people.” See the picture below. Using this calculation, the amount of fentanyl seized in the last few months by our Texas Troopers is equivalent to nearly 12 million (*11.988 million*) lethal doses.



When we think about the potential of 12 million people losing their lives, it underscores the serious public health threat this drug presents now that the Mexican Cartels are increasing its availability to communities throughout the nation. To further put this in perspective, 12 million people is approximately equivalent to the *combined state populations of three members on this committee– Vermont (623,657 – Rep. Peter Welch), Maryland (6.052 million – Rep. John Sarbanes) and Kentucky (4.454 million – Rep. James Comer). (**combined population: 11.129 million*)

An unsecured border with Mexico has resulted in other negative consequences. The Mexican Cartels work closely with transnational and U.S.-based gangs to support their criminal operations on both sides of the U.S./Mexico Border, and they provide a readily available retail distribution chain for their drugs. In Texas border communities, the Mexican Cartels recruit children to support their smuggling operations, and they actively recruit and corrupt local, state and federal officials.

In Mexico, they engage in kidnappings, robberies, torture, extortions and murders for profit. The level of violence in Mexico is unconscionable, and reports have shown that murders in Mexico are at a historic high with more than 29,000 homicides reported in 2017. Cartels employ corruption and terrorism tactics and strategies to protect their criminal operations, and they pose a serious threat to the domestic security of Mexico.

In Texas our Governor and members of the Legislature have been clear, “an unsecured border with Mexico is a federal responsibility but a Texas problem.” The State of Texas understands that securing our nation’s border with Mexico is the sovereign responsibility of the federal government. Yet in the absence of adequate federal resources to secure the border, it has been necessary for the state to provide substantial resources to support the brave men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol in protecting the state and nation from the many threats stemming from the failure to secure the U.S./Mexico border.

Governor Abbott has repeatedly called on the federal government to provide the U.S. Border Patrol with sufficient personnel, technology, aircraft, tactical boats and infrastructure beginning in the areas with the highest concentration of human and drug smuggling in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, which has been the epicenter for the nation.

We applaud the brave men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol for their commendable actions in addressing this formidable task with the limited resources they have been provided. We are grateful for their dedication to keeping our nation safe from an array of public safety and homeland security threats. Texas is concerned that if we see a repeat of 2014 – when waves of foreign nationals including children and family units showed up at the U.S./Mexico border to turn themselves into law enforcement – U.S. Border Patrol agents will again be overwhelmed with detaining, transporting and processing large numbers of individuals through federal immigration procedures. A scenario where droves of individuals seeking asylum once again arrive at the U.S./Mexico border will result in substantial security gaps along the border, and Mexican cartels and other criminal elements will be eager to exploit those national security vulnerabilities.

In 2014, the situation was so dire, the Texas leadership and legislature directed the Texas Department of Public Safety to deploy State Troopers, Special Agents and Texas Rangers to the Rio Grande Valley from other areas of Texas to conduct around-the-clock ground, marine and air operations. We sustained these statewide deployments for over three years until the Governor and legislature provided an additional 500 State Troopers permanently assigned to the border region along with additional tactical marine boats, aircraft and detection technology assets. Unlike natural disasters, the state of Texas was not been reimbursed for providing direct assistance to the federal government, and the local communities in our border regions directly impacted were never reimbursed for their tremendous contributions at the height of the 2014 crisis.

The State of Texas also deployed the Texas National Guard to the border, and Governor Abbott has kept them in place since. The Governor and legislature also funded additional Texas Game Wardens and the Texas Border Prosecutors Unit (BPU), and both have played an essential role in enhancing the level of security at the border. The BPU has also played a key role in addressing the Mexican Cartel smuggling infrastructure in border communities, which includes gang networks.

I can assure you that the state leadership and legislature would much rather use state revenue to address other vital priorities to our taxpayers, such as education, transportation and public health. We are grateful for the recent actions by the Administration to deploy additional National Guard Troops to the Texas/Mexico border, and we are hopeful that the U.S. Border Patrol will ultimately receive the resources needed to secure the border. Securing our international border with Mexico can be and should be done as soon as possible as there are serious public safety and national security consequences on a daily basis – not to just Texas, but the entire nation – in failing to do so. Included below is a list of some of the resources that the State of Texas has provided to assist the U.S. Border Patrol with their vital mission.

Lastly, I would like to again thank Chairman DeSantis and the other distinguished members of this subcommittee for your unwavering commitment to national security and securing our nation's borders in a way that helps ensure the safety of all Americans.

Texas Border Security

January 2018

Strategic Intent

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) will work with its local and state partners to provide direct assistance to U.S. Customs and Border Protection to deter, detect and interdict smuggling along the Texas/Mexico border through the deployment of an integrated network of detection and communication technologies and an increase in ground, air and marine interdiction assets.

DPS will work with its local and federal partners and the Border Prosecution Unit to degrade the smuggling infrastructure used by the cartel plaza bosses to smuggle drugs and people into Texas.

The Texas Rangers will work with the Border Prosecution Unit and our federal partners to deter smuggling related corruption along the border by increasing the number of public corruption investigations, arrests and prosecutions.

DPS will work with its local and federal partners to target transnational criminal activity including drug trafficking, labor trafficking, sex trafficking and money laundering in key Texas transshipment and trafficking centers and other impacted areas throughout the state.

(I) DPS Deterrence and Detection Assets Deployed

DPS enhances the level of detection coverage directly on the border through the deployment of motion detection cameras, day and night tactical boat patrols, helicopter patrols, and fixed wing aircraft patrols with FLIR and integrated communications technology.

A. DPS Maritime Assets

The State of Texas has deployed DPS and TPWD boats on the Rio Grande River to deter and detect smuggling activity.

DPS Boats Assigned to the Border:

Tactical Boats	Deployed	Pending	Totals
Shallow Water	6	--	6
Extreme Shallow Jet	7	--	7
Total	13	--	13

B. Detection Cameras

The State of Texas has implemented a camera detection program leveraging low-cost, high-capability motion-detection and low-light camera technology. Through this program, detections are immediately relayed to U.S. Border Patrol and DPS Command Posts, and directly to interdiction assets on the ground and DPS surveillance aircraft. The Texas Rangers and the U.S. Border Patrol work closely together to dramatically expand the ability to detect smuggling events in real time through this program.

i. DPS Installation Team

U.S. Border Patrol Technical Agents have installed and provided maintenance service for the vast majority of these cameras to date. Most recently, the DPS Special Operations Group has provided installation support to U.S. Border Patrol. To further increase capacity, DPS has established an installation team using Texas State Guard personnel.

ii. Detection Cameras Deployed

4,300 detection cameras are currently deployed throughout the border region.

C. Aviation Assets

The State of Texas has deployed DPS and Texas Military Forces aircraft to detect smuggling attempts along the Texas-Mexico border and to assist in interdicting those attempts. The fixed-wing aircraft receive direct alerts from U.S. Border Patrol ground sensors and DPS motion-detection camera activations, and the helicopters receive the DPS motion-detection camera alerts. All DPS aircraft can communicate directly with U.S. Border Patrol Agents and Troopers on the ground.

DPS Aircraft with Advanced Detection and Communications	Deployed	Pending	Totals
Helicopters	9	--	9
Mid-Altitude Fixed Wing	2	--	2
High-Altitude Fixed Wing	2	--	2
Total	13	--	13

(II) Interdiction

Once detected, it is important the smugglers either be interdicted or denied entry, which requires a well-coordinated and timely law enforcement response that can only be achieved with a sufficient number of personnel staffed around the clock.

A. Troopers

Trooper Positions Currently Permanently Assigned:	945
New Permanent Trooper Positions Hired and Deployed:	356
Pilots and Tactical Flight Officers Permanently Assigned:	25
Total Personnel Strength*:	970

**New Permanent Trooper Positions are included in Trooper Positions Currently Permanently Assigned*

B. Tactical Operations

DPS Special Operations Group and U.S. Border Patrol Special Operations conduct joint tactical operations in remote and high-threat areas. The Texas Rangers oversee DPS tactical operations, which include Ranger Recon teams, the DPS Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, and six Regional Special Response Teams (SRT).

C. Intelligence and Information Sharing

The Joint Operations Intelligence Centers (JOIC) centralize all of the border incident data across 53 counties and 171 law enforcements agencies to provide a shared view of the threat picture and trending patterns.

Joint Operations Intelligence Centers:	6
Texas Rangers:	2
DPS Border Liaison Officers:	5
State Guard Personnel:	13
HQ Intelligence Analysts Permanently Assigned:	5
Border Region Intelligence Analysts Permanently Assigned:	18
Total Personnel Strength:	43

D. Communications

Communications Operators Permanently Assigned:	55
Radio Technicians Permanently Assigned	6
Total Personnel Strength:	61

(III) Targeting the Smuggling Infrastructure

The arrests of members and associates of smuggling groups and criminal networks operating in the border region, such as cartel operatives, statewide and regional gangs, transnational criminal gangs, wanted and convicted felons, and criminal aliens, degrades the smuggling infrastructure and increases community safety.

Special Agents Permanently Assigned: 137

(IV) Targeting Border Corruption

The Mexican cartels seek to corrupt individuals and institutions on both sides of the border to support their smuggling operations. Successful investigations degrade the cartels' smuggling ability and serves as an important deterrent to those who would betray public trust and the rule of law.

Texas Rangers Permanently Assigned*: 42

**Texas Rangers also assist local law enforcement agencies in the investigation of major crimes such as homicides, kidnappings, robberies and sexual assaults.*

**Does not include the number of DPS Special Operations Group Personnel assigned to border tactical missions.*

DPS Operational Activities

Criminal Arrests in the Border Region

		2016	2017	Operation total (06/14-12/17)
Texas Highway Patrol	Total Criminal Arrests	15,265	20,689	53,432
DPS Special Agents	Total Criminal Arrests	1,863	1,535	6,575
Texas Rangers	Total Criminal Arrests	523	382	1,715
DPS Total	Total Criminal Arrests	17,651	22,606	61,722

**Felony DWI, intoxication manslaughter and other serious traffic offenses, felony Offenses against the Family, as well as Illegal Alien detentions and referrals to U.S. Border Patrol, are not included in the arrest statistics above.*

Public Corruption Arrests in the Border Region

	2016	2017	Operation total (06/14-12/17)
Texas Rangers	39	33	161

DPS Aviation Operations in the Border Region

2016	3,950
2017	3,134

DPS Special Operations Group Tactical Missions in the Border Region

2016	2,562
2017	2,555
Operation Total (06/14-12/17)	7,442

DPS Apprehension Support to U.S. Border Patrol

	2016	2017	Operation total (06/14-12/17)
Illegal Alien Detections and Interdiction Assistance			
Cameras	109,247	72,459	271,194
Aviation	3,257	1,084	12,371
Tactical Marine Unit	601	305	1,383
Illegal Alien Detentions and Referrals			
Tactical Marine Unit	1,466	402	3,735
Texas Highway Patrol*	1,578	745	2,323
Total Apprehension Support to U.S. Border Patrol	116,149	74,995	291,006

**DPS did not capture Texas Highway Patrol Illegal Alien Detections and Referrals prior to December 1, 2015 and is now being captured state-wide. Recent reporting may be lower than the actual amount due to a transition in the method of capturing the data.*

Drugs Seized by DPS in the Border Region*

	DPS Only (lbs)
2016	48,334.27
2017	59,425.84
Operation Total (06/14-12/17)	258,555.09

**These totals do not include seizures where DPS provided direct support to another agency.*

Drugs Seized by Type by DPS in the Border Region* (6/14 – Present)

	Marijuana	Cocaine	Methamphetamine	Heroin
Weight (lbs)	250,206.75	5,426.20	2,547.54	374.60
Dosage Units	226,983,560	246,128,091	231,108,752	33,983,112

**These totals do not include seizures where DPS provided direct support to another agency.*

Dosage Units

Marijuana	500 mg
Cocaine	10 mg
Methamphetamine	5 mg
Heroin	5 mg

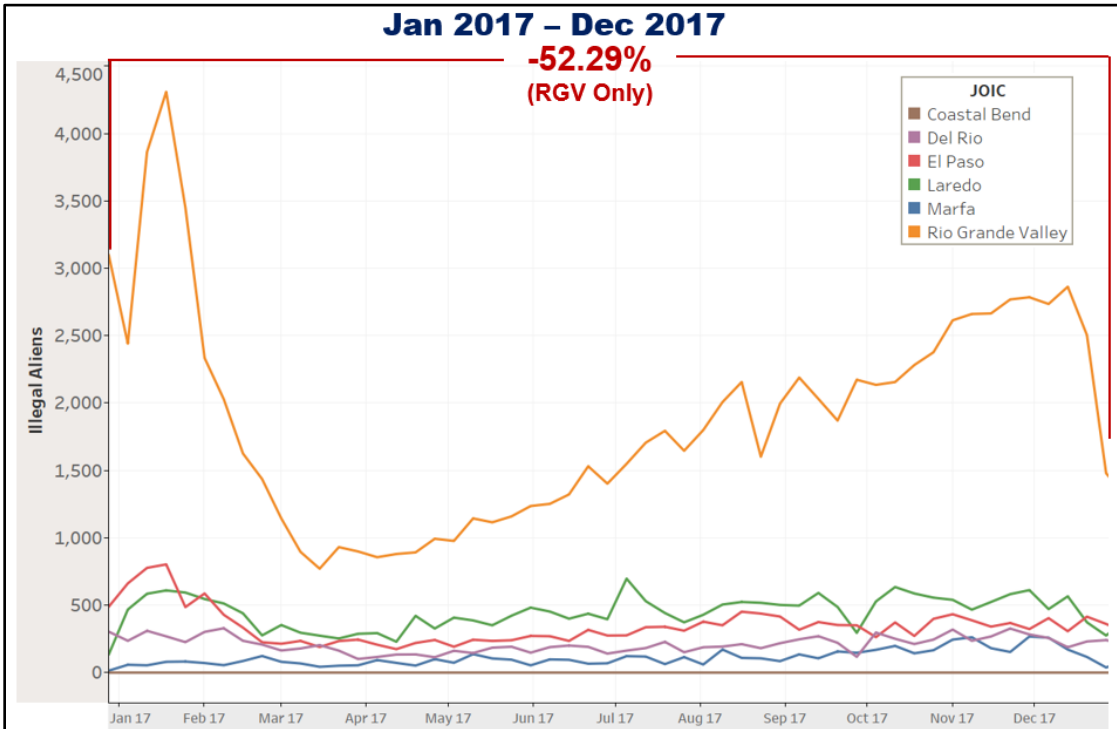
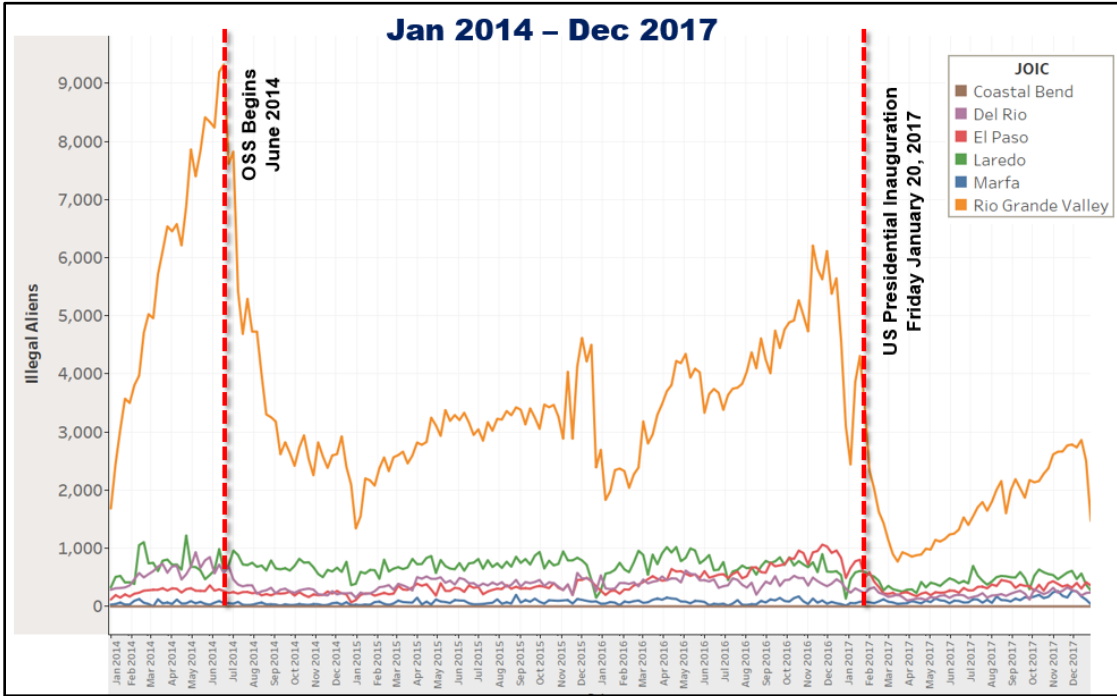
Currency Seized by DPS in the Border Region*

	DPS Only
2016	\$13,910,212
2017	\$10,571,211
Operation Total (06/14-12/17)	\$44,706,147

**These totals do not include seizures where DPS provided direct support to another agency.*

Smuggling Trends

The Texas Legislature provides funding to centralize the collection and sharing of border incident data across all jurisdictions in the border region, which comprises local, state, and federal agencies across 53 counties and more than 171 separate law enforcement agencies in the border region.



U.S. Border Patrol IA Apprehensions in the Border Region

FYTD 2018* (10/17-12/17)	50,461
FY 2017**	207,693
FY 2016**	278,470
FY 2015**	221,684

**Unofficial U.S. Border Patrol statistics. **CBP reconciled apprehensions. Data includes El Paso Sector, which comprises parts of TX and NM.*

U.S. Border Patrol Family Unit Apprehensions in the Border Region

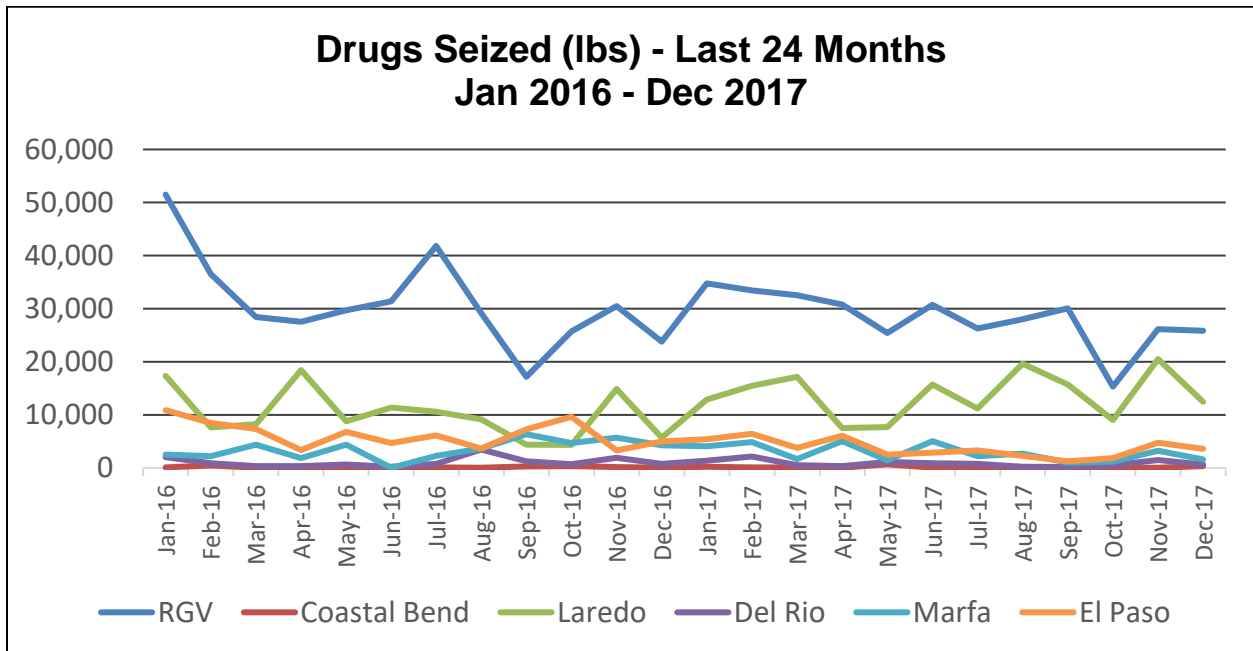
FYTD 2018* (10/17-12/17)	14,257
FY 2017**	62,764
FY 2016**	63,910
FY 2015**	32,949

**Unofficial U.S. Border Patrol statistics. **CBP reconciled apprehensions. Data includes El Paso Sector, which comprises parts of TX and NM.*

U.S. Border Patrol Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions in the Border Region

FYTD 2018* (10/17-12/17)	7,291
FY 2017**	31,827
FY 2016**	47,192
FY 2015**	31,109

**Unofficial U.S. Border Patrol statistics. **CBP reconciled apprehensions. Data includes El Paso Sector, which comprises parts of TX and NM.*



Note: The above border region statistics represent local, state and federal seizures.

Drugs Seized in the Border Region

	Drugs (lbs)
2016	627,669.48
2017	593,830.04
Operation Total (06/14-12/17)	2,756,943.02

Note: The above border region statistics represent local, state and federal seizures.

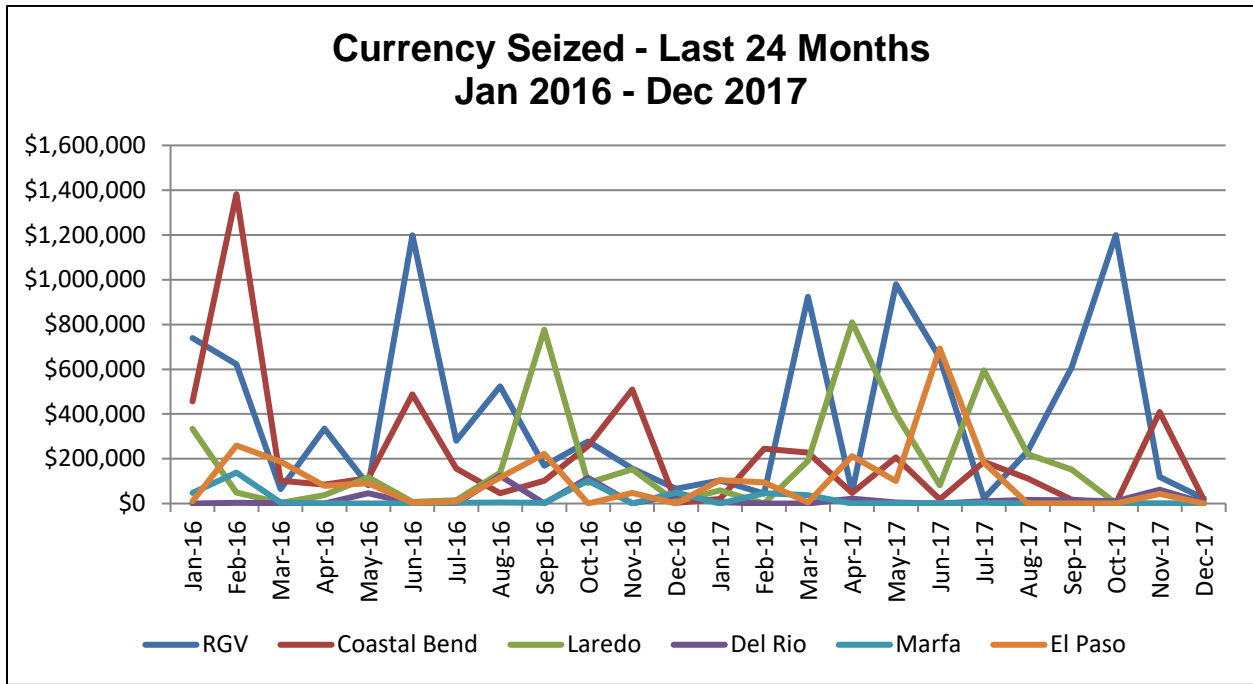
Drugs Seized by Type in the Border Region (6/14 – Present)

	Marijuana	Cocaine	Methamphetamine	Heroin
Weight (lbs)	2,691,204.64	33,773.10	28,600.50	3,364.78
Dosage Units	2,441,417,790	1,531,920,797	2,594,591,599	305,247,457

Note: The above border region statistics represent local, state and federal seizures.

Dosage Units

Marijuana	500 mg
Cocaine	10 mg
Methamphetamine	5 mg
Heroin	5 mg



Note: The above border region statistics represent local, state and federal seizures.

Currency Seized in the Border Region

2016	\$11,650,369
2017	\$10,649,892
Operation total (6/14-12/17)	\$59,532,913

Note: The above border region statistics represent local, state and federal seizures.