

**Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee
Government Issue Paper
Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee
Cross-Border Recognition Working Group**

June 2024



**U.S. Customs and
Border Protection**

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**Cargo and Conveyance Security/ Office of Field Operations
Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee
Cross-Border Recognition Working Group
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Action Required: Informational

Background:

- Within the Secure Trade Lanes subcommittee, the Cross-Border Recognition working group was formed. The working group is tasked to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with recommendations and advice on various trade facilitation approaches.
 - Potential improvements to physical, technical, and operational aspects of border infrastructure.
 - Improvements and/or potential operational changes to the Unified Cargo Processing (UCP) program.
 - The further development of the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) program, and that of Mexico's Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program, to ensure that the two programs are aligned.

Issue:

- Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) members are expressly concerned regarding impacts of CTPAT suspensions of rail carriers (Union Pacific, BNSF, and Ferromex) and the impacts of CBP enforcement actions on them. The group is interested in discussing business resumption processes in the rail environments where a CTPAT and/or Mutual Recognition Arrangement component exists. The group forwardly recognized the urgency for CBPs response – yet is seeking to continue the dialog around best practice approaches that the rail carriers and CBP could consider implementing that would help mitigate any future reoccurrences.
- The trade is very interested to receive status updates and lessons learned from the Unified Cargo Processing (UCP) program and to learn of any expansion plans.
- The trade has expressed continued interest in the status of the CTPAT program establishing an office at the Port of Laredo. CBP has advised that it is being considered and further updates will be provided when available.

Current Status:

- CBP and the CTPAT program initiated a reengagement with the COAC Cross-Border Recognition Group via formal meetings on November 16, 2023, and a regular cadence of bi-weekly meetings has been established.
- Initial discussions have primarily focused on an overview of CTPAT support for Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lane access and U.S./Mexico land border trade operations.

Next Steps:

- The working group's activity is anticipated to take at least 12 months.

- Over the subsequent sessions, additional topics covered several components with a nexus to de minimis, and its inherent threats and trends. CBP challenged the work group regarding steps the trade may consider to combat the severe level of sustained threats associated with precursor and fentanyl smuggling.

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