



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Environmental & Natural Resources Enforcement (ENRE)

OUR MISSION

Detect and deter environmental and natural resource crimes in U.S. bound supply chains by investigating environmental and natural resource crimes in U.S. bound supply chains.



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Conflict Diamonds

Conflict or “blood” diamonds are diamonds mined in a conflict zone and then sold to finance military action opposed to legitimate or internationally recognized governments.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is active in the U.S. implementation of the Clean Diamond Trade Act, through U.S. participation in the Kimberley Process. The Clean Diamond Trade Act prohibits the “importation into, or exportation from, the U.S. of any rough diamond, from whatever source, unless the rough diamond has been controlled through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS).”

The Kimberley Process is an international certification scheme that regulates trade in rough diamonds. It aims to prevent the flow of conflict diamonds, while helping to protect legitimate trade in rough diamonds. The original certificate must be presented in connection with an importation or exportation of rough diamonds upon demand by CBP officials. CBP has identified several instances of fraudulent certifications, such as when individuals were invited to Sierra Leone to view rough diamonds that were later evaluated as fake stones and were also provided with a fake Kimberley Process certificate.



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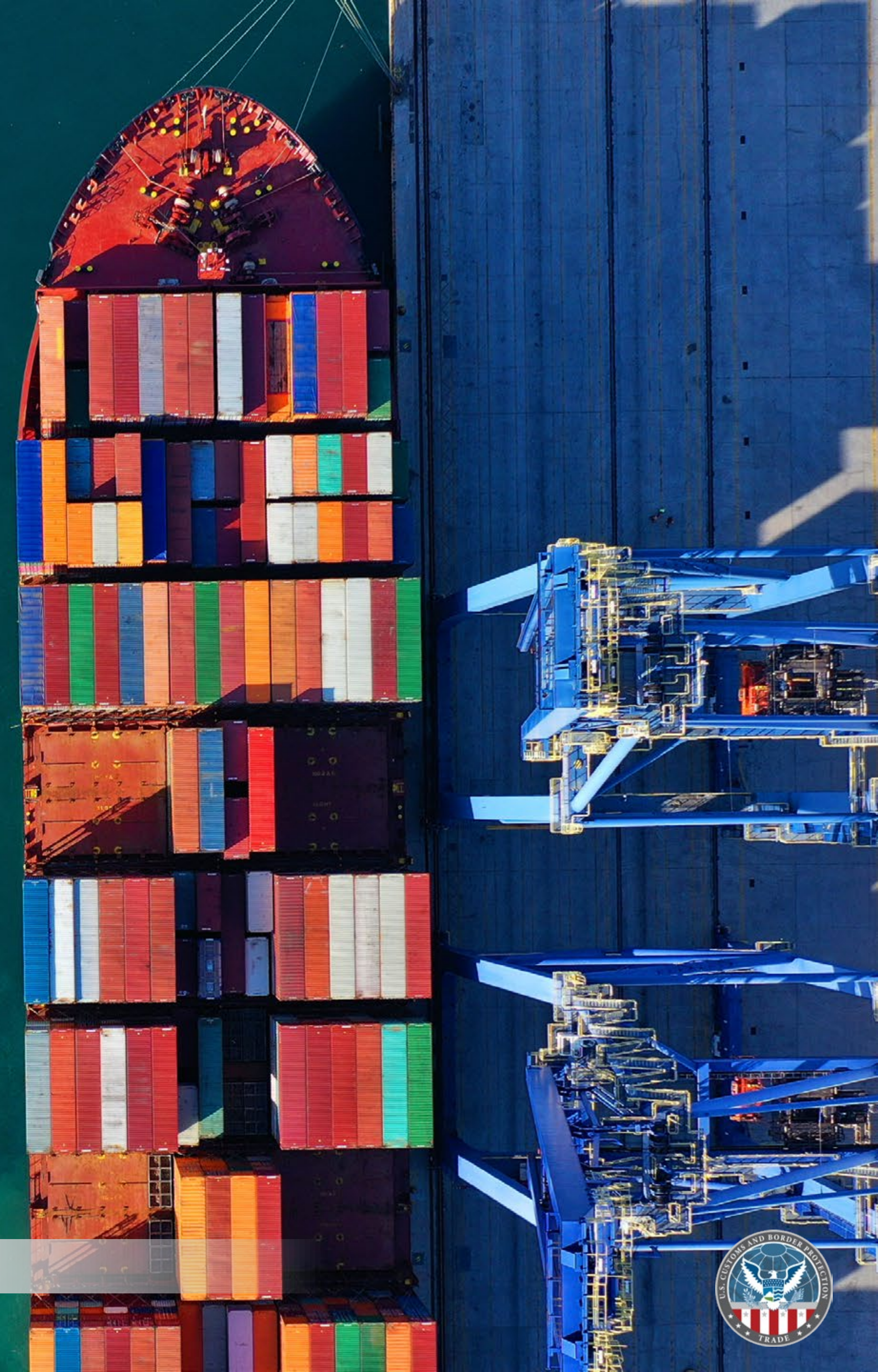


Green Trade Strategy

With the Green Trade Strategy, CBP is looking to set an example for customs authorities around the world to develop higher, greener standards for global trade while creating an opportunity for government, industry, and the public to unify efforts in the creation of a more sustainable future. Climate change has a clear connection to international trade and CBP's trade mission.

Recent studies have estimated that global supply chains may account for as much as 80 percent of the world's total carbon emissions. In addition, environmental crime represents between \$85 billion and \$265 billion each year in criminal revenues and is often linked to money laundering and the funding of transnational criminal organizations. CBP is well positioned to make an impact on the path to a cleaner, more sustainable international trading environment due to the agency's ability to influence global supply chain practices and enforce laws against environmental crime. In addition, CBP's Green Trade Strategy aligns with broader Department efforts and supports a whole-of-government approach to mitigating the risks and seizing the opportunities associated with climate change.

The Strategy establishes a proactive model to combat the negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on the agency's trade mission while strengthening existing enforcement activities against environmental trade crimes including illegal logging; wildlife trafficking; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; illegal mining; and other violations of environmental laws and regulations.



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Illegal Logging

Illegal logging is the most profitable natural resource crime on the planet and the third most profitable transnational crime behind counterfeiting and drug trafficking. Preventing illegal timber shipments from entering the U.S. protects American businesses from unfair competition, while cutting off a major revenue stream for transnational criminal organizations and bad actors who use profits from illegal logging to finance violent conflict, drug trafficking, wildlife trafficking, money laundering, and illegal mining.

The illegal timber trade is soaked with blood, financing violent conflict, and providing a cover for other crimes, such as drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal mining, wildlife trafficking, and forced labor. By prosecuting criminals involved in illegal timber networks, CBP can mitigate the environmental, humanitarian, and economic consequences of this crime, both at home and abroad, to ensure greater transparency moving forward. The Lacey Act is one of the authorities that grants CBP the legal authority to enforce those consequences.

In 2016, CBP played a critical role in the first felony conviction related to the import or use of illegal timber and the largest criminal fine ever under the Lacey Act. The government convicted Lumber Liquidators Inc. for importing illegally harvested timber that originated in eastern Russia in a region that was home to the endangered Siberian tiger and Amur leopard.



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Illegal Mining

Illicit mining is often directly related to transnational criminal activity and human rights violations. CBP uses its authorities to investigate and deter illegal mining. Some of the most common illegally mined materials are gold and diamonds. Gold is one of the most illicitly mined resources.

In many countries, there is significant overlap between illegal logging and illegal gold mining. Criminal networks often use land cleared by illegal logging operations to establish illegal mining activities where they use mercury to search for raw minerals, like gold. Mercury pollutes nearby water sources, poisoning wildlife and local drinking water.

One of the newest threats in illegal mining is mining to produce batteries. This mining takes place all over the world and impacts impoverished, developing, and indigenous communities, which are least equipped to counter the abusive organizations that are piloting this growing industry.



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Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fishing

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing threatens the stability of marine fisheries, decreases food security of coastal communities, and poses increased risk to endangered and protected species. Poaching and overfishing have increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has pushed more local fisher and people living in poverty, into IUU practices due to limited economic opportunity. Worldwide, IUU fishing accounts for around 20 percent of global catch; in certain countries, that number is closer to 50 percent.

Unfortunately, there is a significant overlap between IUU fishing practices and the use of forced labor and species endangerment. Crew members are recruited under false pretenses and trapped into debt bondage or coerced to perform hazardous labor for little or no pay aboard distant water fishing vessels that may spend months at sea without making port calls, as in the issue surrounding the Chinese fishing fleet Dalian Ocean Fishing Co. Ltd. At least six workers died on the fishing fleet due to abusive working conditions and the same company also committed wildlife crimes by practicing illegal shark ginning.



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USMCA Environmental (Chapter 24)

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) entered into force on July 1, 2020. The USMCA includes clearly defined environmental provisions for the three signatory countries. Chapter 24, or the USMCA Environment Chapter, outlines seven key multilateral environmental agreements that the United States, Canada, and Mexico commit to enforce and uphold as a part of USMCA. For the first time in a U.S. trade agreement, the USMCA also addresses other pressing environmental issues such as air quality and marine litter.

The USMCA commits the United States, Canada, and Mexico to take actions to combat key environmental challenges, such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and harmful fisheries subsidies. The USMCA commits the United States, Canada, and Mexico to take actions to combat trafficking in timber, fish, and other fauna and wildlife.

The seven environmental agreements that all USMCA signatory nations agree to uphold are:

1. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
2. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
3. Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
4. Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat
5. Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
6. International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling
7. Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna



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Wildlife Trafficking

Illegal wildlife trafficking is one of the most profitable natural resource crimes. It encompasses the harvesting and selling of wildlife, and wildlife products, (including pelts, ivory, plants, and furs) to be used as medicine, fashion, food, or pets sold to consumers.

Addressing wildlife trafficking presents a formidable challenge to national security. To help combat this, the United States and 183 other countries around the world have banded together to implement The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) treaty to ensure international trade in wild plants and animals is legal, traceable, and biologically sustainable. As issues of wildlife use grow ever more complex, CITES provides tools to effectively conserve the world's diverse natural resources.

The criminal groups and transnational networks engaged in this trade are frequently caught up in other illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and human smuggling. The global movement and trafficking of animals and plants also expose actors along the shipment routes to the transmission of zoonotic diseases, which can leap from animals to humans. This not only poses significant concerns for pandemic preparedness but also carries substantial economic implications for the agricultural sector and poses threats to native wildlife.



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Environmental Pollution

Environmental pollution refers to the introduction of contaminants, foreign substances, or naturally occurring ones, into the environment causing adverse change.

Air pollution, exposure to lead and other chemicals, and hazardous waste, including improper waste disposal, can cause debilitating and fatal illnesses. More than nine million premature deaths occur yearly, with the majority due to air pollution.

Environmental pollution is a clear threat to Americans' health and safety because it recognizes no boundaries, affecting populations far beyond where the environmental pollution is occurring. It exacerbates U.S. poverty and inequality in both urban and rural areas, and significantly contributes to climate change.

CBP recognizes the criticality of addressing pollution because of its unacceptable toll on health of the U.S. population, as well as associated GDP losses. Pollution management helps alleviate poverty, boost shared prosperity, and address the vital demands of millions of people for healthier and more productive lives. CBP works directly with the EPA to enforce anti-pollution compliance and assure the legality of products entering the United States, as they relate to international trade.



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- [Wildlife Trafficking](#)
 - [The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)
- [Environmental Pollution](#)

How can you help?

- If you wish to report allegations of natural resources crimes, please submit them to CBP on the [Trade Violations Reporting website](#).
- Allegations may be reported anonymously. The more detailed and timely the information you provide, the more likely the enforcement action can be successful.

