



In This Issue

On the Hill: CBP Testifies Before Three House Committees	1
Border Crossing Cards and B1/B2 Visas	1
What Does a Secure Maritime Border Look Like?	1
Administratively Uncontrollable Overtime at DHS	1
Lethal Highs: CBP Labs Protect America from Designer Drugs	2
CBP Enforcement News	2

Office of Congressional Affairs
202.344.1760

Michael J. Yeager,
Assistant Commissioner

Kim M. Lowry,
Deputy Assistant Commissioner

Branch Chiefs

Joe Croce
– Budget & Appropriations

Angie LaTour
– Strategic Planning & Outreach

Stephanie Talton
– Border, Air & Marine Operations
– Field Operations & Intelligence

Chase Wollenhaupt
– Trade & Agriculture



Vigilance



Integrity



Service to Country

www.cbp.gov

On the Hill: CBP Testifies Before Three House Committees



Border Crossing Cards and B1/B2 Visas

On November 14, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Field Operations Acting Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Wagner testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, for a hearing titled, “Border Security Oversight, Part III: Border Crossing Cards and B1/B2 Visas.” In his written statement, Wagner emphasized the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) efforts to detect and deter nonimmigrant visa violations, while securing and facilitating legitimate international travel. CBP works in close partnership with our Federal partners, state and local law enforcement, the private

sector, and our foreign counterparts to improve our ability to identify and address fraudulent visa activity and nonimmigrant status violations, including potential overstays, at the earliest possible point.

“In concert with our partners,” Wagner stated, “CBP strives to ensure that those seeking to visit the United States for short-term business or pleasure are appropriately vetted, and any document deficiencies are addressed before boarding a flight or other conveyance bound for the United States, and before admission at a United States port of entry (POE).”



What Does a Secure Maritime Border Look Like?

On November 19, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Air and Marine (OAM) Assistant Commissioner Randolph Alles testified before the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, for a hearing titled, “What Does a Secure Maritime Border Look Like?” In his written statement, Alles highlighted that OAM, in coordination with its partners, disrupts illicit activity long before it reaches U.S. shores. In Fiscal Year 2013, these efforts resulted in the arrest of 2,997 individuals, the apprehension of more than 48,000 illegal migrants, and the seizure of over 3,100 weapons, \$24 million in currency, and 820,000 pounds of illegal drugs. While these figures demonstrate OAM’s maritime

security effectiveness, “[m]aritime security cannot be measured by a single metric, stated Alles, “[r]ather, a secure maritime border is one where ample opportunities and capabilities are present to mitigate threats and keep our communities safe.”

To maintain maritime security efforts, Alles said “OAM will continue to use a risk-based approach to adapt and align our personnel and assets as needed to address emerging and dynamic threats and to keep our maritime borders secure.”

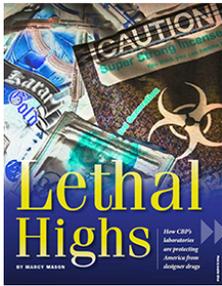


Administratively Uncontrollable Overtime at DHS

On November 20, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Border Patrol Deputy Chief Ronald Vitiello and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Chief Human Capital Officer Catherine Emerson testified at a House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security hearing titled, “Abuse of Overtime at DHS: Padding Paychecks and Pensions at Taxpayer Expense.” In a joint written statement, Vitiello and Emerson thanked the Subcommittee for the opportunity to address DHS’s use of Administratively Uncontrollable Overtime (AUO).

“[T]he Department has sought legislative changes for several years that would enable U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to reform and rationalize its compensation structure,” stated the witnesses. “AUO no longer meets the needs of a 21st century law enforcement environment where increasing amounts of surveillance and border security are conducted remotely.”

The full written testimonies are available on the [CBP Website](http://www.cbp.gov).
Please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs for additional information.



Lethal Highs: CBP Laboratories Protect America from Designer Drugs

The Winter 2013 issue of *Frontline*, the official magazine of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), features the critical efforts of CBP's Laboratories and Scientific Services (LSS) in protecting the American public from harmful products. By analyzing potentially harmful substances that arrive at ports of entry or at international mail facilities, CBP's labs identify and often uncover hidden elements.

Designer drugs, such as synthetic cannabinoids (fake marijuana) or bath salts, are highly dangerous and deceptive psychoactive substances that are chemically designed specifically to evade existing drug laws. Since first identified in 2007 through the expertise and innovative techniques of skilled CBP lab scientists, CBP has encountered increasingly sophisticated designer drugs and in greater volumes.

What makes designer drugs especially dangerous is the perception that they're safe. Often marketed as legal highs, the public is led to believe that these drugs have been tested and pose no danger. They're camouflaged as harmless household products such as plant food, room fresheners, stain removers, toilet bowl cleaners, incense or bath salts.

"One of the biggest problems we have with designer drugs is how little information we have on their acute or long-term pharmacology," said Marilyn Huestis, the chief of chemistry and drug metabolism at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a part of the National Institutes of Health based in Bethesda, MD. Some effects, however, have been observed. "With the synthetic cathinones, the bath salts," said Huestis, "there has been behavior that's linked to violence and death."

Beyond these problems are the ones confronted by law enforcement. "These drugs aren't on the controlled substance list because their chemical compositions have been tweaked a little," said Ira Reese, the executive director of CBP's LSS division. "When we find a new chemical compound, we report it to the Drug Enforcement Administration and it gets placed on the controlled substance list within 90 to 120 days," said Reese. "But then, the molecular structure is tweaked a little bit more, which means it's not on the list again. So it has to go through the same 90 to 120 day process to get on the list to make it illegal. . . [u]nless these drugs are prohibited, it makes it very difficult to protect the public from using them."

"On average, we see a new compound every week," said CBP Science Officer Mike McCormick. "It's quite a challenge because as a drug's molecular structure starts to change, it takes a lot of work to figure out what these substances are. This happens every time a new designer drug comes out."

The CBP labs' contributions go further. They participate in major sting operations including Project Synergy, a DEA-led operation that was the largest synthetic designer drug bust in U.S. law enforcement history. The seven-month operation, which ran from December 2012 until June of this year, involved a myriad of law enforcement agencies across 35 states. Approximately 3,300 pounds of designer drugs and \$15 million in cash and assets were seized. Teams of lab personnel from CBP and DEA worked side by side at the mail facilities and express courier hubs.

The growth of designer drugs, however, is skyrocketing. According to the 2013 World Drug Report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the number of new psychoactive substances is proliferating at an unprecedented rate, posing unforeseen public health challenges. "It's a worldwide epidemic," said Reese, who oversees the CBP labs. "It's a very serious problem and it's not going away anytime soon."

Please read the full article, written by Marcy Mason, in the Winter 2013 (Volume 6, Issue 3) issue of *Frontline* on the [CBP Website](#). For more information, please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



Placing a suspicious sample on an infrared spectrometer, CBP Science Officer Mike McCormick tests for designer drugs.

Photo by Robert Helman

CBP Enforcement News



CBP Officers Seize Record \$10.1 Million Pot Shipment

Nogales, AZ – On November 20, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers working at the Nogales Port of Entry Mariposa commercial facility seized 20,375 pounds of marijuana when a shipment of Mexican squash was referred for a routine inspection. When the shipment was offloaded, a CBP canine alerted to the presence of marijuana. The estimated street value of the seized marijuana is \$10.1 million.

– Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.



Border Patrol Agents Arrest 10 After Stopping a Drive-Through at the Border

Calexico, CA – On November 29, 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol agents assigned to the El Centro Sector disrupted a human smuggling attempt resulting in the arrest of 10 illegal aliens. The incident occurred when Border Patrol cameras captured a vehicle driving north across the border toward Calexico, CA. Responding agents deployed a tire deflation device and successfully stopped the vehicle and arrested a total of 10 illegal aliens.

– Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.

The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

Phone: (202) 344-1760; Fax: (202) 344-2152; E-mail: OCAInquiry@cbp.dhs.gov.

Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](#) webpage for Frequently Asked Questions, News and Events, and other CBP Resources.