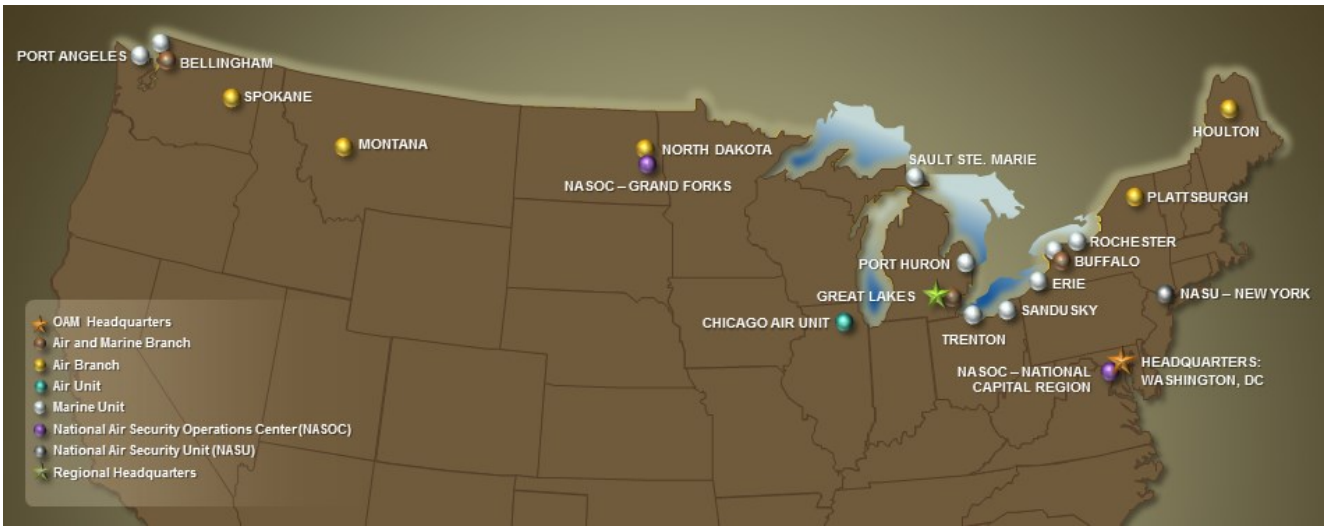
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Air and Marine Northern Border Region

FACT SHEET



The Northern Border Region is comprised of sparsely populated federal, state and tribal lands along the immediate border area. As such, the Northern Border Region environment differs appreciably from the Southwest Border Region and requires a different law enforcement approach.

Ninety percent of the Canadian population lives within 100 miles of the U.S. border. Historically, the Northern Border Region has yielded significantly lower numbers of illegal incursions when compared to the Southwest Border Region; however, there is an undisputed presence in Canada of known terrorist affiliate and extremist groups, including Hezbollah and Hamas.

Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) exploit the diverse conditions at the Northern Border. Approximately 95 percent of the marijuana produced in British Columbia is destined for the United States and is smuggled across the Northern Border. TCOs will often use small, fast conveyances (e.g., helicopters, snow mobiles, vessels) to cross during fog conditions or the darkness of night for cover.

The Office of Air and Marine established its presence on the Northern Border on August 20, 2004, opening the Bellingham Air and Marine Branch in Washington state.

Northern Border Region at a Glance:

- **Area of Responsibility**

  A nearly 4,000-mile international boundary between the United States and Canada running from Washington to Maine, including the Great Lakes region.

- **Geography/Weather Challenges**

  Difficult terrain, with open plains between heavily forested lands in the west and east coasts. Weather challenges include varying skies, including low clouds, coastal fog, heavy rain, snow and ice.

UH-60 Black Hawk near Bellingham, Wash.