

# CBP Reduces Lanes at Otay Mesa POE, Businesses Brace for Full Closure

By Joe Little

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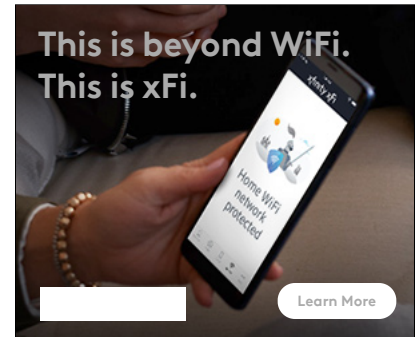


CBP announced they would reduce their commercial lanes from 10 to eight, potentially affecting businesses. NBC 7's Liberty Zabala reports. (Published Wednesday, April 3, 2019)

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Lanes will be reduced at the busy commercial port in Otay Mesa and businesses on the American side of the border are bracing for the impact of a potential closure of the U.S.-Mexico border by the Trump Administration.

The Otay Mesa Port of Entry is trafficked heavily by 18-wheel trucks carrying cargo between the two countries, roughly \$42 billion worth of goods each year,



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according to statistics from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

On Tuesday, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials announced they would reduce the number of commercial lanes that these trucks frequent from 10 to eight and would suspend after-hours services.

The changes come as some of the port's border patrol officers are reassigned; the Trump administration said on Monday up to 2,000 inspectors from border crossings would be pulled to handle a surge of families arriving at the U.S.- Mexico border, many of them Central American asylum seekers.

### Otay Mesa Braces for Potential Border Closure

With the threat of a southern border shutdown, many in Otay Mesa are bracing for the economic impact it would bring. NBC 7's Joe Little has more. (Published Tuesday, April 2, 2019)

President Donald Trump has threatened to shut down the southern border if illegal immigration into the U.S. is not halted, though on Wednesday he said progress has been made with Mexico to address the problem.

"Let's see if they keep it done," he said of Mexico. "Now, if they don't, or if we don't make a deal with Congress, the border's going to be closed, 100%."

Mariana Vincent, a U.S. customs broker based in Otay Mesa, is worried how the lane reduction -- or even a full closure -- would affect her business, 80% or more of which comes from across the border.

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"My business will for sure be affected in the short term but the most affected would be my clients," Vincent said.

Merchandise is dropped off by Mexican truckers at her border-adjacent warehouse and sits until a U.S. trucking company to pick it up and transport the items to their final destination.

"If a Mexican company cannot ship their product, sometimes the U.S. company cannot finish the final product. It affects both sides of the border," she explained.

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Alejandra Mier y Teran, the executive director for the Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, said that a full closure to the border would mean "absolutely



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devastating" consequences to 1,200 San Diego businesses that have employees on the southern side of the border.

"It would basically put our organizations, our companies at a halt if our employees can't come to work," Mier y Teran said.

For now, Vincent is hoping the closure doesn't happen but is coming up with a plan to find her employees places to sleep on the U.S. side of the border in case it does.

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