INSTITUTE OF THE AMERICAS

DOUG LIDEN
Non-Resident Fellow, Institute of the Americas

BIOGRAPHY

La Jolla, CA.

Doug Liden is a water infrastructure engineer and cross-border environmental policy leader with more than three decades of experience advancing wastewater, drinking water, stormwater, and water reuse solutions along the U.S.–Mexico border. He joins the Institute of the Americas as a Non-Resident Fellow in March 2026, following a distinguished 34-year career with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

For nearly two decades, Doug served as EPA's U.S.–Mexico Border Water Engineer, managing 15 major infrastructure projects totaling more than $50 million and benefiting approximately two million residents in border communities. He played a central technical role in addressing chronic contamination in the Tijuana River watershed, leading feasibility studies under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and overseeing EPA-funded modeling of wastewater plume movement, erosion, and flooding in the San Diego–Tijuana region. While serving as an Embassy Science Fellow at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and the U.S. Consulate in Tijuana, Doug helped draft the agreement for a $474 million wastewater investment package—later adopted as "Minute 328" to the 1944 Water Treaty—marking one of the most significant recent binational environmental infrastructure commitments.

Earlier in his EPA career, Doug managed a $30 million cross-border wastewater project in Mexicali that resolved a longstanding sewage dispute and conducted environmental assessments under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As a Clean Water Act regulator, he authored discharge permits for municipal and industrial facilities, including ocean desalination plants, mines, refineries, power plants, and wastewater treatment systems, and contributed to national revisions of effluent guidelines.
Doug is the recipient of numerous honors, including EPA's Gold Medal for Exceptional Service, the Russell Train Sustainability Award, and a 2025 "Bridge-Builder Award" from the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. He has also received formal recognition from the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of State, and the City of San Diego for his leadership in advancing binational environmental cooperation.

He is the co-author of peer-reviewed research on real-time sewage detection, wastewater plume modeling, and erosion dynamics in transboundary watersheds. Fluent in Spanish, Doug holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University.

At the Institute of the Americas, Doug will contribute expertise in cross-border water governance, infrastructure finance, watershed resilience, desalination and water reuse policy, and binational environmental diplomacy, supporting IOA's work across the Americas on sustainable water solutions and environmental cooperation.

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