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CBP Officers Find \$100K Hidden in Box of Detergent

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Laredo, Texas – U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the Laredo port of entry seized \$99,480 in undeclared currency inside a box of detergent soap.

The currency seizure occurred on Monday, July 20. CBP officers and Border Patrol agents working outbound (southbound) inspections seized \$99,480 in undeclared currency at the Juarez Lincoln Bridge. A CBP officer referred a 2000 Honda Accord driven by Jorge Alberto Zavala Vega, a 23-year-old Mexican national from Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico for a secondary examination.

The driver gave a negative declaration for currency in excess of \$10,000, weapons or ammunition. During the inspection of the vehicle, CBP officers noted discrepancies with a box of detergent soap that was in the trunk of the vehicle. CBP canine "Aras" alerted to the presence of currency/weapons in the box of detergent soap. A non-intrusive imaging system scan on the box of detergent soap revealed anomalies inside the box.

CBP officers opened the box of detergent soap and discovered 13 bundles containing a total of \$99,480 in undeclared U.S. currency. CBP officer arrested Zavala Vega on bulk cash smuggling charges and turned him over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agents who investigated the seizure. CBP officers seized the vehicle and the undeclared currency.

"The coordinated work of CBP officers and Border Patrol agents during the enhanced outbound inspection operations continue to have great success," said Joe Uribe, acting CBP port director, Laredo. "So far this fiscal year, more than \$10 million in undeclared currency has been seized at the Laredo port of entry."

Individuals are permitted to carry any amount of currency or monetary instruments into or out of the U.S. However, if the quantity is \$10,000 or higher, they must formally report the currency to CBP. Failure to declare may result in seizure of the currency and/or arrest. An individual may petition for the return of currency seized by CBP officers, but the petitioner must prove that the source and intended use of the currency was legitimate.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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