Section 916 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as amended, provides the following definition:

(e)(4) United states-mexico border region. - The term 'United States-Mexico border region' means the area of the United States within 150 miles of the border between the United States and Mexico, except that the term does not include any standard metropolitan statistical area that has a population exceeding 1,000,000.

As of the 2010 Census, the excluded Metropolitan Statistical Areas are:

- Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana CA MSA = 12,828,837
- Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario CA MSA = 4,224,851
- San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos CA MSA = 3,095,313
- Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale AZ MSA = 4,192,887
- San Antonio-New Braunfel TX MSA = 2,142,508

(Census 2010 - Table DP-1)