



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ERRATA FORM

DATE: October 22, 2024
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Land Use and Environment Group

Agenda Item

9

**SUBJECT: LOCAL EMERGENCY REVIEW: PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL
EMERGENCY FOR U.S.-MEXICO TRANSBOUNDARY POLLUTION
ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

The errata is being submitted to note revisions/changes to the following document(s) related to the subject agenda item:

- ☐ Recommendation
- ☐ Board Letter Content
- ☒ Supporting Documents

SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

Updated Attachment F to correctly have both letters to the Governor and the President. Previously, the latter two pagers were duplicates of Attachment E.

There are no changes or impacts to the recommendations.

COSD CLERK OF THE BOARD
2024 OCT 21 PM 4:15



Nora Vargas

CHAIRWOMAN

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

September 13, 2024

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

As Chair of the Board of Supervisors of San Diego County, I recently wrote to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to urgently request that assistance be provided immediately to the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) to monitor and mitigate toxic gases, strong odors, and ongoing air pollution affecting communities impacted by the transboundary water pollution crisis in the Tijuana River Valley. Attached is my letter. As a Board Member of CARB, I share CARB's belief that the California-Mexico border region is connected by common cultural history, familial ties, ecological resources, and economies. CARB also understands that improving air quality in the border region is critical to meeting our air quality and climate goals. The pollution crisis in San Diego County remains the environmental crisis of our lifetime, with over 100 billion gallons of sewage dumped into our waterways in the last six years that have raised health concerns and closed local beaches for over 1,000 days. The sewage and associated air pollution pose a grave public health threat that is only exacerbated by the current excessive heat wave impacting San Diego.

Specifically, there is a need for air purifiers to filter out specific odors related to the pollution crisis in the Tijuana River Valley. A County pilot program recently provided 414 air purifiers to local residents that included one air purifier and two replacement air filters. The air purifiers are CARB certified, and EnergyStar rated. To expand this program to all residents in the South County area, APCD would need \$2.2 million to provide each household with an air purifier and two replacement filters. The region has received an estimated 3,400 total requests for air purifiers already.

The County greatly appreciates the continued support from your Administration to address this crisis. At this time, APCD needs more immediate resources to further monitor and respond to air pollution in the Tijuana River Valley and prevent adverse health impacts and the region needs resources to mitigate the impacts from the crisis. San Diego County is committed to working with all

partners to end the transboundary pollution crisis once and for all, and your partnership and collaboration will be key to our success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora E. Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nora" being more prominent.

NORA VARGAS,
Chairwoman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Members of the San Diego State Legislative Delegation



Nora Vargas

CHAIRWOMAN

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

September 9, 2024

Hon. Liane M. Randolph, Chair
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Randolph:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors of San Diego County, I am urgently requesting that assistance be provided immediately to the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) to monitor and mitigate toxic gases, strong odors, and ongoing air pollution affecting communities impacted by the transboundary water pollution crisis in the Tijuana River Valley. As a Board Member of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), I share CARB's belief that the California-Mexico border region is connected by common cultural history, familial ties, ecological resources, and economies. CARB also understands that improving air quality in the border region is critical to meeting our air quality and climate goals. The pollution crisis in San Diego County remains the environmental crisis of our lifetime, with over 100 billion gallons of sewage dumped into our waterways in the last six years that have raised health concerns and closed local beaches for over 1,000 days. The sewage and associated air pollution pose a grave public health threat that is only exacerbated by the current excessive heat wave impacting San Diego.

Over the weekend, the APCD advised people, especially those with health issues, the elderly, and families with kids, to stay indoors due to strong odors being documented from the Tijuana River Valley. Air quality impacts caused by this sewage crisis are well known by residents of impacted areas, and I have tirelessly advocated for more resources to address the impacts of this pollution. In May, I wrote to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Mandy Cohen to formally request the CDC to investigate the public health impacts of the sewage crisis. Specifically, I asked the agency to deploy resources on the ground in San Diego County to study the prevalence of contaminants in the air, water, and soil caused by the excessive pollution. We received confirmation from the CDC in August that they, along with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, will conduct a timely and thorough review of the relevant pollution data over the coming months.

The County greatly appreciates the continued support from Governor Newsom to address this conflict, but at this time, APCD needs more immediate resources to further monitor and respond to air pollution

in the Tijuana River Valley and prevent adverse health impacts. Extreme heat in San Diego County, combined with high levels of ongoing sewage pollution, is resulting in extreme odors that greatly impact the lives of those living in cities like Imperial Beach. In an effort to improve air quality, I led the first installation of air monitor sensors in the region, but more must be done and can only be done with the support of your agency.

San Diego County remains committed to working with all partners to end the transboundary pollution crisis once and for all, and we request your agency's immediate assistance to address ongoing air pollution with more support for the APCD.

Sincerely,

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NORA VARGAS,
Chairwoman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Hon. Yana Garcia, Secretary, CalEPA
Hon. Nancy Ward, Director, CalOES
Members of the San Diego State Legislative Delegation



Nora Vargas

CHAIRWOMAN

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

September 13, 2024

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

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The County greatly appreciates the continued support from your Administration to address this crisis. At this time, APCD needs more immediate resources to further monitor and respond to air pollution in the Tijuana River Valley and prevent adverse health impacts and the region needs resources to mitigate the impacts from the crisis. San Diego County is committed to working with all

partners to end the transboundary pollution crisis once and for all, and your partnership and collaboration will be key to our success.

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NORA VARGAS,
Chairwoman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Members of the San Diego State Legislative Delegation



Nora Vargas

CHAIRWOMAN

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

June 30, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC

Re: County of San Diego's request for Federal Emergency Declaration for San Diego County

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors, I write to urgently request a Federal Emergency Declaration for San Diego County regarding the ongoing transboundary pollution and sewage crisis in the Tijuana River Valley impacting beach water quality across multiple shorelines in our region, from the international border to as far north as the city of Coronado. I strongly believe that working together under your leadership we can find a solution for this environmental injustice that has plagued our frontline communities.

San Diego County is home to some of the most beautiful coastlines and beaches in the United States, which remain a central economic engine to our County and its residents. However, for decades now, our beaches and coastal waters have been and continue to be polluted due to sewage runoff from the Tijuana River and the failure of infrastructure from wastewater treatment plants across the border. The U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) has documented 100 billion gallons of toxic effluent entering the U.S. through the Tijuana River since 2018 and 35 billion gallons since December 2022. As a result, some of our beaches have been closed for over **550 consecutive days** due to the unsafe levels of pollutants in the water. These closures not only impact the enjoyment of San Diego's beaches for our residents, but also have downstream economic impacts for tourism and local businesses that cater to locals and tourists alike. In 2021 the San Diego County Board of Supervisors unanimously declared pollution at the Tijuana River Valley a public health crisis. Through this declaration, the County of San Diego acknowledges that the diverse sources of contamination have a direct correlation to health outcomes in South County and the coastal communities, posing a health and environmental threat. The polluted waters also significantly impact San Diego County's numerous military installations, inhibiting U.S. military readiness. The burden of this environmental crisis also disproportionately falls on the County's communities of color, furthering a long history of environmental and economic injustice.

On June 27, 2023, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors unanimously proclaimed the existence of a county-wide local emergency due to the transboundary pollution and sewage issues affecting the region. Through this proclamation, the County acknowledges the detrimental impacts to the region caused by the persistent cross-border sewage and pollution in

the Tijuana River Valley and throughout ocean waters of the south county coastlines and the urgent need for a similar declaration at the federal level. Though we are grateful for the dedicated \$300 million from the USMCA to address this crisis, it remains inadequate to fully address this emergency. Even with an additional \$140 million invested by Mexico, it will take hundreds of millions more dollars and swift federal agency coordination to solve this crisis. In the same way, resources are mobilized in the event of natural disasters, a Federal Emergency Declaration for the Tijuana transboundary pollution would enable unprecedented action at all levels of government and much-needed coordination along with the allocation of critical resources to once and for all end the ongoing sewage crisis.

For the above reasons, I urgently request a Federal Declaration of Emergency for San Diego County. We thank you for your administration's ongoing commitment to environmental protection and justice. We also ask that you put these values into action for the people of San Diego County and our binational region.

Sincerely,

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NORA VARGAS
Chairwoman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, First District

CC: US Secretary of the Interior Debra Haaland; Environmental Protection Agency Director Michael Regan; Small Business Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman; Members of the San Diego County Federal Delegation

Enclosure