



Nora Vargas

CHAIRWOMAN

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

October 22, 2024

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves
United States House of Representatives
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Carper and Chairman Graves:

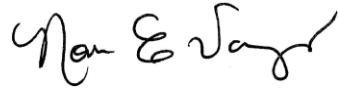
On behalf of the County of San Diego, I am writing to express the County's support for the inclusion of language to authorize projects in the Tijuana River Valley watershed in the final Water Resources Development Act legislation. The inclusion of language authorizing \$200 million in Army Corps of Engineers projects in the Tijuana River Valley watershed would help address decades of water pollution and its impacts on the local ecosystem in San Diego County. The version of WRDA passed by the House of Representatives includes this language; however, the Senate's version does not. The County urges Congress to include this important provision in the final bill authored by the conference committee.

The ongoing water pollution crisis in the Tijuana River Valley continues to impact the health and livelihoods of thousands of South San Diego County residents. The Corps' longstanding expertise in building and maintaining waterway projects will directly benefit the future of the South Bay and the communities that live in the Tijuana River Valley. Including the House's provision authorizing projects in the Tijuana River Valley Watershed in the final enacted legislation is a vital first step to prioritizing restoration of a highly polluted environment and bringing more waterway projects to the region.

The Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency for the water pollution crisis over a year ago, and some beaches in South County have remained closed for over 1,000 consecutive days due to unhealthy levels of bacteria in our beach water originating from the Tijuana River. Nearby residents continue to be impacted by the crisis, whether from sewage-related odors impacting public health or economic impacts on those whose livelihood depends on the area's beach tourism. This crisis has gone on for decades, and authorizing the Corps to conduct remediation efforts will help the long-term rehabilitation of the Tijuana River Valley.

The County of San Diego urges the inclusion of this language in the final WRDA legislation text and appreciates your leadership on this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if San Diego County can provide any additional information on this issue.

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 the most prominent.

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