

DATE: October 6, 2024

TO: San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Meeting Date: 10/08/2024
Agenda Item No.: 13
Distribution Date: 10/07/2024
Batch No. 02

SUBJECT: ITEM 13: DECLARING THE TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY AN EPA SUPERFUND SITE TO UNLOCK STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS FOR TOXIC REMEDIATION AND CLEANUP (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Dear San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of WILDCOAST, I write in strong support of declaring the Tijuana River as a Superfund site as proposed in Item 13 by Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, in order to accelerate a long overdue clean-up strategy.

WILDCOAST is an international team that conserves coastal and marine ecosystems and addresses climate change through natural solutions. To achieve our mission we establish and manage protected areas, protect and restore blue carbon ecosystems, and partner with local communities, governments, and the private sector.

For the past 24 years, we have worked on creating solutions to this crisis and have succeeded with the installation of a trash boom, stopping over 250,000 lbs of trash from entering the ocean, but we need support. Declaring the Tijuana River as a Superfund site, as proposed by Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer in Item 13, will open up access to billions of dollars in federal funds that are necessary to clean up this ongoing emergency. Our community is sick and deserves access to clean air and clean water. The time is now to act on this, and voting yes on this proposal is a monumental step in the right direction.

Thank you for considering this monumental declaration. If you have any questions about our support or our work on this issue, please contact Angela Kemsley, WILDCOAST's Director of Conservation Impact at angela@wildcoast.org.

Sincerely,



Angela Kemsley
Director of Conservation Impact
WILDCOAST

From: henkinp@earthlink.net
To: [Wolff, Tim](#); [Sodeman, David](#); kprather@ucsd.edu
Cc: [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Vargas, Nora \(BOS\)](#); [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Mayor Paloma Aguirre Imperial Beach](#); [Councilmember Jack Fisher](#); [CA Senator Steve Padilla \(18 CV\)](#); [Asmbly David Alvarez \(80 CV\)](#); [CA Senator Brian Jones \(40\)](#); [CA Senator Toni Atkins](#)
Subject: [External] Re: FIXING THE TJ RIVER VALLEY AIR QUALITY
Date: Sunday, October 6, 2024 4:29:36 PM

Hi All,

Would outhouse-type lime or baking soda (with or without vinegar) poured on the TJ River Valley sewage help get rid of the TJ River Valley sewer smell?

I imagine this would work fairly well if the sewage was contained and concentrated in retaining ponds reservoirs as it once was.

Probably not that expensive either, especially compared to all the suffering, lost tourism/business, doctor visits, etc., the smell causes.

Please let me know whether this will work, and what we are doing to solve the problem. The air purifiers are a good start, but they only work indoors.

Over the last year or so, I have suggested concrete lining to speed up the sewage flow, retaining ponds (at least we could isolate the stuff,) and hand-held or mobile air quality monitors to zero in on the source. I'm sure there are other good suggestions, **but we can do things ourselves.**

I am a bit tired of seeing stories like the below where someone asks someone else to do something which probably won't happen for years. And meanwhile businesses are closing. People are getting sick.

The good news is that some people think the air pollution is getting a tiny bit better. So it's pretty clear that we can do something ourselves to fix it.

So what are you waiting for? A chart of how close to each source of the pollution you can safely be? Mass die-off? Fed action in a few months or years after the election? **Let's keep it up, get this fixed now, finish the job.** High fives all around?

Regards,

Paul Henkin

[KSWB-TV San Diego](#)

Residents demand action to address sewage crisis in South Bay

Story by Tony Shin [10/06/2024]

SAN DIEGO (FOX 5/KUSI) — Frustration is growing among South Bay residents as they continue to deal with a severe sewage crisis. On Saturday, dozens gathered at a public health forum to find answers and voice concerns over the pollution flowing from Mexico into the Tijuana River Valley, which has also left local beaches contaminated.

The forum, held at Mendoza Elementary School, featured Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician known for her role in exposing the Flint, Michigan water crisis a decade ago, when the city's water was contaminated with lead. She drew parallels between the Flint crisis and the ongoing sewage contamination in Imperial Beach.

“I would like to see this community, as they have been, continue to be loud, continue to fight back, and continue to use science to speak truth to power,” Hanna-Attisha urged.

Imperial Beach beaches had only recently reopened for swimming before being closed again due to high pollution levels. The source of the contamination is a mix of sewage and chemical runoff from Mexico, which flows into the Tijuana River and out to the ocean. Residents have long complained about the smell, with many reporting respiratory issues and other health problems.

Bethany Case, a local resident, described the impact on the community, “It’s in our lungs, it’s in our sinuses, it’s in our skin.”

Imperial Beach Mayor Paloma Aguirre has been a vocal advocate for addressing the crisis, which she says has also affected her own health. She, along with other local and state leaders, has been pushing for the situation to be declared a state or national emergency.

“I just sent a letter to President Biden’s chief of staff with a renewed call, now that we understand the very severe and concerning levels of hydrogen sulfide,” Aguirre said. “It’s very consistent with the symptoms and signs of upper respiratory conditions we’ve been experiencing.”

State Senator Steve Padilla echoed the frustration, vowing to continue pushing for solutions. “It’s always frustrating, because people are being affected by this, and these are folks that I represent,” he said. “I’m going to continue to be a very stubborn voice to lift this issue up.”

From: [Dennis Nappen](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Subject: [External] Superfund Site Designation
Date: Monday, October 7, 2024 5:09:06 AM

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Hi, my name is Dennis Nappen and I have lived in Coronado for 37 years and worked in Imperial Beach for the past 12 years.

For years, the Tijuana River has been dumping pollution into our neighborhoods, harming our air, water, and the health of our families.

This hits the South Bay hard and our kids and our communities are paying the price for this toxic mess.

We've been talking about this problem forever, and it's falling on deaf ears. Our communities have been waiting too long.

Getting the Tijuana River designated as a "Superfund site" will allow us to access billions of dollars in federal funds to finally clean up the toxic chemicals that make people sick. Our communities deserve to get its fair share of these federal dollars to accelerate the clean-up work and make sure everyone has access to clean air and clear water.

We need to act now — this cleanup can't wait any longer. Please vote yes on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Dennis Nappen



[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Betsy Mackey](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Subject: [External] Tijuana sewage crisis
Date: Monday, October 7, 2024 5:59:55 AM

We implore you to use superfund status to help with the needed cleanup of the South Bay. The stench, the filth, the beach closures have left a horrible situation for residents and tourists.

If this isn't what superfund status should be used for - when air water and sand are affecting the health of residents - nothing is.

Please we implore you to designate it a superfund site so critical funds can be designated to clean this mess up!

Thank you!
Betsy Mackey

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [VIRGINIA COX](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Ginger Cox](#)
Subject: [External] EPA Tijuana River Superfund Designate
Date: Monday, October 7, 2024 10:00:09 AM

My name is Virginia Cox, and my husband and I live in Coronado. I also have family in Imperial Beach that include my daughter, son-in-law and two granddaughters. We all have been adversely affected by the foul orders and toxic pollution from the Tijuana River run-offs. This has been ongoing for years. It has gotten so bad that my family won't even walk on the beaches blocks from our homes for fear of contamination.

Accessing federal funds and designating the Tijuana River as a "superfund site" is imperative to getting the much needed billions of dollars to begin a thorough clean-up of the toxic mess that pollutes our air and water.

Please vote yes on this proposal.

Sincerely,
Virginia Cox

Sent from my iPad