

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 3

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE TIJUANA RIVER
SEWAGE (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

The Tijuana River Valley (TJRV) and surrounding South Bay communities continue to suffer from impacts from untreated sewage, urban runoff and toxic gases in the air, resulting in recurring contamination of ocean waters and nearby neighborhoods. This crisis has a particular impact on the well-being of residents, the environment, and the economy of the cities and unincorporated communities of Imperial Beach, Chula Vista, National City, San Diego, Bonita, East Otay Mesa, and Coronado.

Under the leadership of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board), the County of San Diego (County), in partnership with stakeholders across the region, as well as at State and federal levels, are collaborating on innovative strategies to address this crisis. Recognizing the significant impacts to the environment, economy, and property within San Diego County caused by persistent cross-border sewage contamination and sewage-impacted ocean waters, the Board first issued a Proclamation of Emergency on June 27, 2023 (16). The Board has since continued the local emergency every 60 days, with the most recent action on September 10, 2025 (1).

On June 24, 2025 (10), the Board adopted a five point plan that directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to evaluate a set of programmatic options, identify priorities based on core County functions and potential public health impact, and return on September 30, 2025, with strategic recommendations and an implementation roadmap.

Subsequent to the June action, on September 9, 2025 (17), the Board additionally directed the CAO to implement an epidemiological public health impact study in affected communities and an economic impact study to assess the full scope of losses caused by the sewage crisis, including impacts on small businesses, property values, and regional tourism, to better inform future funding and mitigation efforts. In addition, on September 9, 2025 (18) the Board adopted a resolution requesting that the State Water Resources Control Board allocate Proposition 4 cross-border rivers funding to projects focused on addressing the ongoing environmental and public health crises in TJRV.

Today's item requests the Board receive the directed update on ongoing efforts to strengthen the County's response to the Tijuana River sewage crisis through strategic recommendations outlined as part of this action. A roadmap for implementation will be further refined through the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Receive this update on ongoing efforts to strengthen the County's response to the Tijuana River sewage crisis.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Tijuana River sewage crisis disproportionately affects residents in South Bay communities, including Imperial Beach, Chula Vista, National City, Bonita, and East Otay Mesa. According to the Assessment of Chemical Exposures survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry in November 2024, nearly 65 percent of surveyed South Bay households reported physical health symptoms and a decline in quality of life linked to sewage contamination from the Tijuana River Valley. This underscores stark disparities in environmental health impacts within the region. These areas include neighborhoods with higher proportions of low-income households, and vulnerable populations who are more likely to experience adverse health effects from environmental contamination.

Various actions discussed as part of today's update are designed to prioritize interventions where health risks are highest. By focusing resources on these communities and improving access to health and environmental protections, the County of San Diego is committed to addressing the root causes of this crisis, reducing disparities in exposure, enhance public health outcomes, and promote equitable access to safe environments for all residents.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's proposed action supports the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the region; Sustainability Goal #5 to protect water in all forms; and Sustainability Goal #6 to develop natural and organic land management policies that protect ecosystems, habitats, biodiversity, and soil health throughout the county while providing opportunities for all residents to access and enjoy the outdoors. These objectives will be advanced through coordinated efforts with local, State, and federal partners, with a focus on addressing the root causes, as well as ongoing impacts of the Tijuana River Valley sewage crisis on nearby communities. The proposed measures emphasize safeguarding public health, improving environmental conditions, and conserving natural resources so that current and future residents, as well as visitors, can continue to benefit from the County's diverse landscapes and ecosystems.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendation. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years. There may be future fiscal impacts associated with future related recommendations, which staff would return to the Board for consideration and approval.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

The ongoing effects of the Tijuana River sewage crisis have impacted local commercial activity, reduced tourism, and created operational challenges for small businesses in coastal and border-adjacent communities. Allocating resources to address conditions in these areas supports efforts to stabilize economic activity, reduce business interruptions, and promote long-term economic resilience in affected communities.

The economic impact study discussed as part of today's update is anticipated to provide the Board and regional partners with a clear picture of the losses communities are facing and provide critical insights to guide relief efforts and long-term recovery planning.

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter