



September 22, 2023

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

The San Diego Unified Port District (District) respectfully requests that you include \$310 million in the emergency supplemental bill for desperately needed infrastructure to address raw sewage, industrial waste, and other contamination flowing across the border from Mexico into Southern California. This ongoing transboundary pollution and sewage crisis is impairing water quality, air quality, causing negative health effects, and shuttering beaches and impacting businesses in the United States.

San Diego County is home to some of the most beautiful coastline and beaches, which are a central economic engine to the San Diego region, provide unmatched outdoor recreation and exploration opportunities to our residents and visitors, and provide training for the military on vital national security objectives. Tragically, for decades, our beaches and coastal waters have been, and continue to be, polluted by transboundary pollution originating in Mexico.

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 635 consecutive days due to the unsafe levels of pollutants in the water. This environmental disaster has further implications for national security impacts related to U.S. Navy readiness and to the health of U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents and U.S. Coast Guardsmen who train along this coastline and routinely come into contact with toxic and other hazardous materials. Furthermore, the burden of this environmental crisis also disproportionately falls on some of the county's most underserved communities of color, furthering a long history of environmental and economic injustice.

In 2019, the region secured \$300 million in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement to expand the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) from 25 million gallons-per-day to 50 million gallons-per-day, to alleviate the pollution burden. However, the IBWC and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have identified urgent repairs to SBIWTP that must be undertaken before capacity can be expanded. The request for \$310 million will allow for the expansion of SBIWTP to be completed so that it can treat additional sewage and other pollution flowing across the border and reduce the longstanding impacts to the surrounding areas within the United States. This is a crucial step toward fulfilling the estimated \$1 billion costs for US-side infrastructure needed in the region.



We thank California Senators Padilla and Feinstein, as well as Congressman Scott Peters, Congressman Juan Vargas and the San Diego County Congressional Delegation, for requesting the \$310 million in the supplemental package and for their continued leadership on this important issue.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rafael Castellanos".

Chair Rafael Castellanos  
Port of San Diego

Cc: San Diego Congressional Delegation