



City of Santa Barbara

Office of the Mayor

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The White House
Council of Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place NW
Washington, DC 20503

RE: Request for Federal State of Emergency for the Tijuana River Transboundary Pollution Crisis

Dear Honorable Brenda Mallory:

We are writing to request your urgent attention on the ongoing environmental disaster on the Southern California border. We simply cannot sit idly by as billions of gallons of toxic wastewater has crossed the border resulting in devastating public health and economic impacts to our fellow coastal Californians.

The City of Santa Barbara has a deep history and proven track record of fighting for environmental causes and a commitment to advocate for more accountability in the illegal dumping of hazardous waste and materials. All our coastal communities are vulnerable to these types of man-made disasters, let alone having to constantly adapt to the impact of a changing climate on our ability to keep beaches open for tourism, recreation, and our local economies.

We strongly urge the Biden-Harris Administration to take decisive action to address the severe pollution crisis in the Tijuana River. The Imperial Beach shoreline located in South San Diego County is tragically recognized as the most polluted stretch of sandy beach in the entire country. With over 500 consecutive days of beach closures due to the ongoing influx of sewage, industrial discharges, and trash from the Tijuana River, the community of Imperial Beach is bearing the brunt of this environmental disaster.

We are formally requesting a Federal Emergency Declaration for the Tijuana River Valley and the shoreline of Imperial Beach. The continuous influx of transboundary pollution is wreaking havoc on the local community, economy, and environment along the coastline of South San Diego County. We are also advocating for the suspension of any statutes or regulations that may hamper an immediate response to the disaster.

The coastal communities of South San Diego County face an immense challenge from the ongoing pollution crisis in the Tijuana River that is beyond local and state control. It is a public health emergency that requires a Federal Emergency Declaration to coordinate and prioritize a multi-agency response to this ongoing disaster. The continuous flow of untreated sewage and other pollutants into our waters is unacceptable and must be addressed immediately.

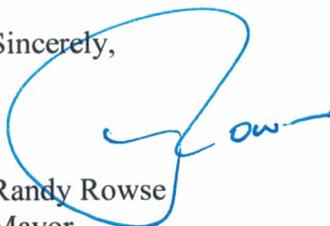


Please consider the environment before printing this letter.

We implore a Federal Emergency Declaration to expedite funding and implementation of projects across multiple federal agencies. The pollution disaster in the Tijuana River warrants the same level of federal agency coordination and response as other national crises such as the Ohio toxic train derailment, Flint water crisis, the 2021 Orange County oil spill, devastating hurricanes, and destructive atmospheric river storms. These examples highlight the urgent need for immediate action and the importance of a coordinated response to protect the health and well-being of our communities.

California coastal communities cannot afford to wait for years for these projects to be implemented while the health and well-being of our residents and the environment continue to suffer. We stand with the City of Imperial Beach and urgently appeal to the Biden-Harris Administration to take decisive action to address the ongoing pollution crisis in the Tijuana River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rowse", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Randy Rowse
Mayor