

# SOUTHERN INDIAN HEALTH COUNCIL, INC.

4058 Willows Road • Alpine, CA 91901  
phone (619) 445-1188 • fax (619) 659-3144  
www.SIHC.org

*a consortium comprised of seven Federally recognized Tribes*

---

Barona Band of Mission Indians • Campo Band of Mission Indians • Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians Jamul Indian Village of California • La Posta Band of Mission Indians  
Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation • Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians

## RESOLUTION # 03292024-04

### SUPPORT FOR DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY AND CALL FOR IMMEDIATE FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS CAUSED BY TRANSBOUNDARY POLLUTION IN THE TIJUANA WATERSHED

**WHEREAS**, The Barona Band of Mission Indians, the Campo Band of Mission Indians, The Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, The Jamul Indian Village of California, The La Posta Band of Mission Indians, The Manzanita Band of The Kumeyaay Nation, and The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians (“Tribes” or “Consortium Tribes”), formed Southern Indian Health Council, Inc. (“SIHC”), a tribal organization as defined in 25 U.S.C. § 450b(1) and Section 501(a)(5) of Title V (25 U.S.C. § 458aaa(a)(5)), for the purpose of providing health care to American Indians and to care for the wellness of the local American Indian communities; and

**WHEREAS**, SIHC represents the interests of seven Federally recognized American Indian Tribes with more than 4250 members throughout South San Diego County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tribal members within the service area of SIHC extend from the coasts of San Diego to the mountain and desert areas, and these members practice cultural, religious, and Tribal activities throughout the region, including the gathering of plant materials within streambed and wetland areas, direct water contact actions and ceremonial activities in these coastal areas; and

**WHEREAS**, coastal communities and ecosystems in South San Diego County have experienced severe and worsening pollution from the Tijuana River for decades, including untreated sewage, industrial waste, and trash and the problem is exacerbated by seasonal ocean currents and climate-change-driven weather events; and

**WHEREAS**, the communities of Imperial Beach, south San Diego, Coronado, San Ysidro and other parts of the South Bay and East County are experiencing serious health, financial, and environmental impacts, and impediments to Tribal cultural uses of these impacted areas; and

**WHEREAS**, San Diego County’s southernmost beaches have been closed due to contaminated water for over 800 days and counting and the shoreline of Imperial Beach was closed the majority of last year, which is particularly troubling because Imperial Beach offers convenient and affordable beach and ocean access for many of San Diego County’s underserved and disadvantaged communities; and

**WHEREAS**, untreated wastewater and sewage in the ocean poses substantial health risks to residents, tourists, and Tribal members from bacteria-laden water, sand, plant materials, and airborne particles which have also been found in preliminary air quality studies in inland communities; and

# SOUTHERN INDIAN HEALTH COUNCIL, INC.

**WHEREAS**, contamination has crippled the ability of Tribal members to use the coastal system and crippled the coastal tourism industry, and damaged local economies, including loss of hotel and hospitality jobs, loss of revenue and livelihoods, and significant declines of local businesses due to beach closures and floods; and

**WHEREAS**, the crisis has negatively impacted ecosystems, with pollution causing significant habitat loss that is negatively impacting fish, shellfish, birds, marine mammals, and other wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tijuana River Valley and Estuary, and adjacent coastline are culturally and spiritually significant areas to the Kumeyaay Peoples north and south of the border since time immemorial and transboundary pollution is limiting safe access to sacred and culturally important places as well as resources used in traditional cultural practices; and

**WHEREAS**, the coastal and inland communities of South San Diego County are dealing with an unprecedented crisis that cannot be addressed by local government only, but requires coordinated Tribal, State, and Federal emergency action; and

**WHEREAS**, immediate funding for short-term solutions and a secured source of ongoing funding to ensure infrastructure maintenance and long-term solutions from the United States and Mexico federal governments could alleviate the toxic pollution devastating areas from the Tijuana River Estuary to Coronado and all the communities in between; and

**WHEREAS**, many of the Tribal governments and the communities of South San Diego County and Tijuana and next of San Diego's federal delegation have requested state and federal intervention in this public health crisis.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that we request that Governor Newsom prioritize this public health emergency and deploy all available resources to provide immediate relief to impacted communities and long-term solutions to this environmental disaster; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, we request that President Biden declare a Federal Emergency for South San Diego County and award all appropriate federal assistance to facilitate resolution of this regional crisis; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, we request that a copy of this Proclamation be forwarded to the offices of President Joseph Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Governor Gavin Newsom, Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler, and Congressmembers Scott Peters, Juan Vargas, Sara Jacobs, Darrell Issa, and Michael Levin to express the interests and concerns of SIHC, and to request their support in this effort.

[CERTIFICATION TO FOLLOW]

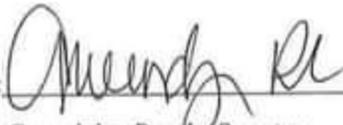
**THIS WILL CERTIFY THAT I**, Erica M. Pinto, am the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of SIHC; **AND** that the Board of Directors consists of seven (7) duly elected Tribal representatives; **AND** that this Resolution was considered and adopted by a duly authorized vote of the Board for which a quorum was present and voting; **AND** that the vote was taken 7 for; 0 against; 0 abstain.

# SOUTHERN INDIAN HEALTH COUNCIL, INC.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 29<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2024.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 4/6/24

Erica M. Pinto, Chairperson

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 04-05-2024

Gwendolyn Parada, Secretary