

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 28, 2019

Mr. Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

We respectfully seek additional information regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-funded report on needed projects in the Tijuana River Valley. We understand that this report includes over \$200 million in potential projects. We also understand that this report has not yet been released. We therefore encourage the EPA to prioritize the completion and release of this report, as we believe it will be useful for informing the future Presidential budget request for Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) funding.

It was our understanding that an EPA-funded report on potential projects to prevent sewage flows into the Tijuana River Valley would be released in June. On June 10, we were pleased to see the *San Diego Union Tribune* celebrate the release of a document detailing such projects.¹ We understood, from the article's description of the "document", "blueprint" and "plan", and quote of an individual who had "contributed to the report", that the report had been released. However, after contacting officials associated with the report, we were told that the report has not been completed. Moreover, we received a twelve-page executive summary of the report on Monday, June 24th. When we inquired about the availability of the final report, we were informed its completion is expected in mid-July. We look forward to the report's completion and immediate release at that time.

We understand that officials have worked diligently to complete this report and that they recognize its importance in improving the health and well-being of the people we represent. BWIP plays a significant role in regulating the United States-Mexico border region as the program helps with the planning, design, and construction of water treatment facilities on the border. A report detailing upwards of \$200 million in potential projects could inform an increase in the current administration's budget request to Congress for BWIP funding. Unfortunately, since 2016, the White House has requested zero funds for BWIP. Congress has successfully increased annual funding for BWIP since 2016. We hope that this report will guide EPA's future budget request for BWIP funding.

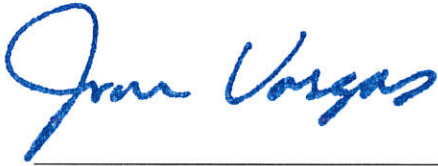
As we have seen, the need for water infrastructure in Tijuana River Valley is urgent. For decades, communities on both sides of the United States-Mexico border have been suffering from chemical pollution that streams north in the Tijuana River. Moreover, according to U.S. Border Patrol representatives, the contamination of the Tijuana River has interfered with the work and well-being of Border Patrol agents. Given these issues, we would expect the

¹ Smith, Joshua Emerson. "Trump EPA releases blueprint for stemming Tijuana River pollution that routinely fouls San Diego beaches." *The San Diego Union Tribune*, June 10, 2019. Accessed June 10, 2019. <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/environment/story/2019-06-09/trump-epa-releases-blueprint-for-stemming-tijuana-river-pollution-that-routinely-fouls-san-diego-beaches>

administration's future budget requests to refrain from eliminating BWIP funding, and to instead substantially increase funding above current levels.

We look forward to working with you moving forward. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our offices.

Sincerely,



JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress



SCOTT PETERS
Member of Congress

MIKE LEVIN
Member of Congress

SUSAN DAVIS
Member of Congress