

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2023

The Honorable Marina del Pilar Avila
Governor, Baja California
Secretaría de la Gubernatura (Oficina del Gobernador)
Edificio Poder Ejecutivo 3er. Piso
Calzada Independencia #994
Centro Cívico y Comercial
Mexicali, B.C.
C.P. 21000

Dear Governor del Pilar Avila:

We write to thank you and the Mexican federal government for the \$144-million commitment to sanitation infrastructure projects in Tijuana, Baja California as outlined in IBWC Minute No. 328. This investment will make a critical dent in the wastewater pollution currently plaguing the Tijuana River and River Valley, as well as the beaches in the border region. This wastewater pollution is badly hurting the communities we represent, and they are counting on the cooperation of our two governments to fix this environmental catastrophe.

To that end, we'd like to open lines of communication between our offices so we may be kept informed of the status of the Mexico-side projects. Our constituents are clamoring for an end to this crisis, and while we know that these investments will take some time to deploy, we respectfully request that your office keep us apprised of the progress being made so we can further assure the people of Imperial Beach, Coronado, and San Diego that relief is on the way. Specifically, we would like to know when you plan to break ground on a new treatment facility at San Antonio de los Buenos (SAB).

Currently, San Diego County beaches, particularly in the cities of Imperial Beach and Coronado, are closed and have been closed for years due to the untreated wastewater flowing into the Pacific Ocean from Punta Bandera and the Tijuana River. These beach closures are devastating to these communities which rely heavily on beach tourism to support their local economies. While we recognize that you are working hard to get a new plant built at SAB, we ask you to consider some immediate, short-term measures that might reduce the bacteria levels at our beaches.

The people we represent in San Diego County, particularly in Imperial Beach and Coronado, are extremely frustrated about their beaches being closed due to health hazards associated with untreated wastewater flowing up the coast. It has been suggested to us that, in the near term, dredging the existing settling ponds at SAB and adding chemical treatment and aerators could reduce bacterial levels enough to reduce our beach closure days. Is your government considering pursuing these approaches?

At the same time, we will continue to push our U.S. federal agencies to pursue upgrades for the International Treatment Plant underway as quickly as possible. This is an urgent priority for all of us.

Thank you for your continued commitment, partnership, and friendship. We look forward to hearing back from you.

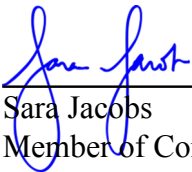
Sincerely,



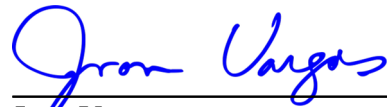
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress