

April 21, 2026

Lee Zeldin

Administrator of the U.S. EPA

Environmental Protection Agency

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20460

Subject: Immediate Support Regarding Hydrogen Sulfide Levels in the Tijuana River Valley

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the International Border Community Steering Committee (CSC), we are writing to urgently request the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's support in addressing the persistent and concerning levels of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) impacting residents of the Tijuana River Valley. Community members continue to experience daily disruptions to their health and quality of life due to elevated pollutant levels, and additional federal attention and resources are needed to protect public health.

The CSC was established in 2022 under the California Air Resources Board's Community Air Protection Program (CAPP) and supported by the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ). The CSC represents a diverse coalition of residents, local organizations, government agencies, industry partners, and advocates working collaboratively to improve air quality in San Ysidro and Otay Mesa East. Together, our Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) and Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) guide community-driven strategies, ensuring that air quality solutions reflect local priorities and measurable progress.

Recent monitoring data, along with resident reports over the past month, have shown increased and recurring spikes in hydrogen sulfide. Community members continue to share ongoing health impacts consistent with H₂S exposure—such as headaches, respiratory irritation, nausea, and worsening symptoms among sensitive individuals. These effects are not abstract concerns; they are daily obstacles that undermine residents' ability to work, attend school, recreate outdoors, and simply feel safe in their own homes.

In light of these conditions, we respectfully request the EPA's assistance in the following areas:

- Immediate investment and implementation in infrastructure improvements to reduce the frequency and severity of pollutant releases affecting the community. Long-standing wastewater and river flow issues continue to contribute to degraded air quality and require structural remedies.

- Funding to support ongoing efforts to purchase air purifiers for impacted residents' homes, local schools, and businesses.
- Consideration of additional monitoring support, including expanded monitoring locations, technologies, and resources for local SDAPCD monitoring staff. Current efforts do not fully capture conditions across the valley, and additional air quality monitors would significantly enhance data accuracy and coverage.

The ongoing hydrogen sulfide impacts pose a clear environmental justice challenge. The International Border Community has long faced disproportionate environmental burdens, and the current conditions in the Tijuana River Valley only amplify these inequities. We urge the EPA to work closely with residents, local agencies, and our Steering Committee to develop an urgently needed response that prioritizes community health and long-term resilience.

Thank you for your attention and continued partnership. We look forward to collaborating with the EPA to safeguard the well-being of the International Border Community and ensure meaningful progress toward cleaner, safer air.

Sincerely,

International Border Community Steering Committee
Community Air Protection Program