



## REGION 9

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105

May 8, 2026

Dear International Border Community Steering Committee,

Thank you for your April 22, 2026, letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Zeldin, regarding the concerning levels of hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) impacting residents of the Tijuana River Valley. Your letter was routed to EPA's Air and Radiation Division in the Pacific Southwest Region, which oversees implementation of community-based and voluntary programs for air toxics, indoor air, and radiation in the Pacific Southwest, which includes the Tijuana River Valley.

First, I want to acknowledge that the persistent hydrogen sulfide odors in the Tijuana River Valley are a significant hardship to the local community and share your deep concerns on the negative public health impacts associated with the Tijuana sewage crisis. Please know that the EPA is working urgently and expeditiously to implement Administrator Zeldin's commitment to provide a permanent 100% solution to this crisis while holding Mexico accountable for transboundary pollution. The Administrator has visited the San Diego border region three times in the past year to personally ensure that all measures humanly possible are taken to accelerate construction of critical water infrastructure in the U.S. and Mexico by 2027 or sooner.

As you may know, the United States and Mexico signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in July 2025 to establish a shared commitment to address the root cause of the sewage crisis by funding critical water infrastructure on both sides of the border. Treaty Minute 333 was adopted less than five months later, to legally bind those commitments and include new obligations for Mexico to ensure their wastewater system is built to account for future population growth. With the EPA's active engagement, significant progress has been made thus far, including the following actions:

- Mexico has obligated \$59M USD in funding for projects underway in 2026, surpassing the \$46M as agreed to in the MOU.
- On August 28, 2025, the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) completed the incremental expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) from 25 million gallons per day (MGD) to 35 MGD within a record 100 days. As a result of this action, 10 MGD of sewage is no longer entering the Tijuana River or Pacific Coastline. Work is underway to further expand the plant's treatment capacity to 50 MGD and account for future population growth.

- In September 2025, Mexico initiated the construction of the “Tijuana River Gates” project with Mexican state and federal funds. This rehabilitation effort of 13 different segments of sewage lines is expected to prevent 5 MGD of sewage from entering the Tijuana River.
- In November 2025, Mexico started rehabilitation of the “Parallel Gravity Line” with \$8.9M USD of Mexican funding. This project will replace 13,200 feet of sewage lines which carry wastewater from central Tijuana to the San Antonio de los Buenos (SAB) treatment plant and should be completed in July 2026.
- Mexico has begun Phase 1 construction of the “Diversion of 10 MGD of Treated Effluent” project, installing pipelines from the La Morita and Arturo Herrera wastewater treatment plants to the Rodríguez Reservoir. On April 27, 2026, the EPA began the 30-day public comment period of its environmental review for Phase 2 of the project—which includes new pump stations and conveyance pipelines and is co-funded through the EPA’s Border Water Infrastructure Program. Once completed, the project will eliminate approximately 10 MGD of treated flows that currently enter the Tijuana River.
- On April 27, 2026, Mexico broke ground on the upgrades to Pump Station 1 (PB-1) which is a critical component to Tijuana’s wastewater system as it pumps Tijuana’s sewage to the SAB treatment plant and to the SBIWTP for final treatment.

Consequently, the EPA’s primary role is to address the sources of sewage pollution by holding Mexico accountable as stipulated in the July 2025 MOU and Minutes 328 and 333.

Regarding the ongoing air quality and odor concerns, the EPA coordinates regularly with state and local partners to provide technical assistance and financial support where our statutory authorities allow. As you know, San Diego County has taken measures to provide residents with air purifiers and the EPA has provided technical assistance and funding, including:

- Provided funding to purchase six sensors to track H<sub>2</sub>S trend levels around the Tijuana River Valley.
- Providing funding to the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) to purchase and operate advanced H<sub>2</sub>S monitoring equipment which is used to provide timely alerts indicating when preventative measures are advised.
- Coordinating closely with SDAPCD in designing their H<sub>2</sub>S monitoring network to provide a representative sample of the general community’s H<sub>2</sub>S levels.<sup>1</sup> This was achieved using appropriate instruments at three locations spanning approximately 5 miles of the Tijuana River Valley.
- Providing funding for air purifiers in 2024; the EPA acknowledges the need for additional funding to support this effort, and continues to work to identify additional funding and to coordinate with SDAPCD about funding opportunities.

The EPA shares your concerns related to the public health impacts of this crisis and appreciates your patience and understanding as short- and long-term infrastructure solutions are put in

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<sup>1</sup> The EPA’s regulations do not set minimum requirements for monitoring H<sub>2</sub>S.

place to end the sewage crisis and odor impacts once and for all. For more information from the EPA, including quarterly public updates on the status of MOU projects, visit the [EPA's USMCA Tijuana River Watershed website](#). For weekly project updates, follow the USIBWC on X: <https://x.com/usibwc>.

Sincerely,

Idalia Pérez, Assistant Director  
Air & Radiation Division