



March 6, 2026

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and
Fiscal Review
1021 O Street, Suite 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Eloise Gomez Reyes
Chair, Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Suite 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Bennett
Chair, Subcommittee No. 4
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: \$5 million from the Community Air Protection Program for local assistance to support ongoing monitoring efforts and the continued distribution of air purifiers to residents impacted by transboundary pollution in the Tijuana River Valley

Dear Chairpersons,

On behalf of the Tijuana River Coalition, we are writing to express our strong support for Senator Padilla's request for \$5 million from the Community Air Protection Program for local assistance with ongoing monitoring efforts and the continued distribution of air purifiers to residents impacted by this transboundary pollution.

The Tijuana River Coalition is a growing coalition of over 50 nonprofit and community-based organizations representing residents, youth, workers, families, scientists, doctors, businesses, and recreators throughout San Diego County. We are dedicated to addressing the severe environmental and public health crisis caused by transboundary pollution in the Tijuana River Watershed located in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

For decades, communities near the Tijuana River Valley have suffered from the impacts of cross-border pollution, consisting of untreated sewage, industrial waste, and pesticides, flowing from Tijuana, Mexico into San Diego County. Although binational solutions are underway, a comprehensive solution will take years, if not decades, and local communities will continue to face environmental and public health impacts without local and state intervention. A pollution "hot spot", which emits a multitude of toxic chemicals and pathogens from the wastewater into the air has recently been identified in the Tijuana River Valley. This "hot spot"

straddles the residential neighborhoods of Nestor and Egger Highlands and is located within three miles of San Ysidro and the City of Imperial Beach. Of the toxic chemicals emitted, hydrogen sulfide has been detected at over 70 times the 30 parts per billion (ppb) 1-hour nuisance standard established by the Air Resources Board and frequently exceeds this threshold. These conditions may lead to chronic health impacts, as long-term exposure to hydrogen sulfide is known to lead to adverse respiratory, neurological, cardiovascular, and ocular impacts. Residents and community members have already reported symptoms such as headaches, respiratory symptoms, throat irritation, nosebleeds, gastrointestinal issues, and associated mental health impacts. The hot spot is located in close proximity to residential areas and multiple schools, including an elementary school less than one mile away.

To address some of these impacts, the San Diego Air Pollution Control District has distributed 10,000 air purifiers to residents and schools in the area and deployed three hydrogen sulfide monitors in the communities of Nestor, Imperial Beach, and San Ysidro. However, San Diego County officials estimate that 40,000 households are impacted, and the local air district has indicated that an additional funding is needed to continue operating the monitoring system for another two years. Recently, the County of San Diego approved \$4 million in funding to support these efforts but there is still a gap of funding needed to provide enough air purifiers to all who are impacted.

For all these reasons, the Tijuana River Coalition supports Senator Padilla's request for \$5 million from the Community Air Protection Program for local assistance with ongoing monitoring efforts and the continued distribution of air purifiers to residents impacted by transboundary pollution.

Thank you for your consideration in this urgent matter.

Respectfully,

Sarah Davidson
Clean Border Water Now Manager
Surfrider Foundation, San Diego County Chapter



Courtney Baltiyskyy
Vice President of Policy and Advocacy
YMCA of San Diego County



Ben McCue
Executive Director
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Liliana Soriano
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Executive Director
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