



UnionYes

# San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council

March 6, 2015

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
[commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov)



**Subject: Comment Letter: Salton Sea**

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Board:

On behalf of over 250,000 working families and 135 affiliated labor groups of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO, I am writing to express our support for the Imperial Irrigation District's request to convene stakeholders to find a definitive, funded solution to prevent the impending public health, economic and environmental crisis of a shrinking Salton Sea.

Imperial County is a working class community where many families struggle to make ends meet under the harsh reality of having some of the poorest air quality in the state. If the Sea is left unaddressed, these challenges will worsen. Mitigation water currently delivered to the Sea under the Quantification Settlement Agreement will stop in 2017. As water levels decrease and shoreline is exposed, dangerous dust particles will become airborne, posing a severe risk of increased heart disease, asthma, lung cancer, and other health problems to families in Imperial, Coachella Valley and even to neighboring communities in Southern California. According to a study by The Pacific Institute, costs to human and economic health could run into the tens of billions.

The Salton Sea is also a valuable environmental support system, hosting over 400 species and serving as a critical link on the Pacific Flyway. The region also has the potential to become California's hub of renewable energy with thousands of megawatts of undeveloped solar, wind, and geothermal resources that could result in thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs.

We look forward to the Board's involvement in this important matter and we call upon the Board to use its power to bring all necessary parties together and convene a collaborative process to identify a specific restoration plan that can be implemented and funded in time to avert this looming disaster threatening our region and the entire State.

Sincerely,

Richard Barrera  
Secretary-Treasurer

cc: Stephen W. Benson, Board President, Imperial Irrigation District  
Ryan E. Kelley, Chairman of the Board, County of Imperial