

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN DIEGO REGION**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
AUGUST 13, 2025**

ITEM 4

SUBJECT

Update from the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). An update on the status and progress of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) upgrades and other infrastructure improvements to prevent pollution from Mexico from entering the San Diego Region. This item is for informational purposes only. The San Diego Water Board will take no action related to the SBIWTP National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit during this meeting but may consider future actions at a later date. (*Melissa Corona*)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Informational item only. No recommendation.

KEY ISSUE

USIBWC has invested significant resources to rehabilitate the SBIWTP, regaining compliance with secondary treatment standards since November 2024. USIBWC also coordinates regularly with the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (MxIBWC) on infrastructure improvements in Tijuana aimed at reducing discharges from the sewage collection system, which often result in transboundary flows of pollution.

PRACTICAL VISION

Consistent with our Practical Vision values of leadership, stewardship, communication, and transparency, this item informs the San Diego Water Board and public of the steps USIBWC has taken to achieve compliance with NPDES permit requirements and abate sources of sewage that flow into the Tijuana River, Estuary, and nearby coastal shorelines.

DISCUSSION

USIBWC owns and operates the SBIWTP and associated infrastructure in the U.S. The SBIWTP receives sewage from Tijuana's collection system and discharges the treated wastewater to the Pacific Ocean through the South Bay Ocean Outfall. The SBIWTP is currently in compliance with secondary treatment standards.

Approximately one-third of the Tijuana River watershed is in the U.S. and two-thirds is in Mexico. In the lower watershed, the river and several of its tributaries cross from Mexico into the U.S. These transboundary flows act as conduits for pollution generated in Mexico, transporting them into the Tijuana River Valley, presenting severe risks to ecological and public health. Minute 328 of the 1944 U.S.-Mexico treaty entitled *Utilization of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande* (1944 Water Treaty) is an international agreement between Mexico and the U.S. that outlines several projects planned through 2027 as well as potential projects for the unspecified future. Completion of this suite of infrastructure projects will provide benefit on both sides of the border,

including a reduction in polluted transboundary flows.

USIBWC will update the San Diego Water Board on the status and progress of infrastructure improvements.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The San Diego Water Board included this item in its notice and agenda for the August 13, 2025 meeting.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None