



# 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 the Environmental Caucus 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. The Environmental Caucus engages union members around issues like climate change, environmental policy and building partnerships with environmental allies. Founding members include AFT Local 1931, CNA-NNU, San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 569, University Professional and Technical Employees-CWA 9119, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB) Local 1998, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) and other unions.

The looming possibility of a shrinking Salton Sea is one of the most significant environmental, public health and economic crises facing our region. Mitigation water currently delivered to the Sea under the Quantification Settlement Agreement will stop in 2017. This will result in further decline of current water levels and exposure of thousands of acres of highly emissive lakebed. Airborne dust from this shoreline will increase risk for serious health problems like heart disease, asthma and lung cancer in Imperial County, the Coachella Valley and potentially, neighboring Southern California communities. According to a study by The Pacific Institute, economic losses and associated costs from these negative impacts could run into the tens of billions. This would be devastating to a struggling region where working families are already stretching to make ends meet.

The environmental consequences will also be severe as the Salton Sea supports more than 400 species of wildlife and serves as a critical link on the Pacific Flyway.

The time for action is now. 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,

Jim Miller, American Federation of Teachers, Local 1931  
Chair, Environmental Caucus, San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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