

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION**

RESOLUTION NO. R7-2017-0022

**REQUESTING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAKE DECISIVE AND TIMELY ACTION
TO ENSURE MEXICO ELIMINATES BYPASSES OF
RAW SEWAGE FROM MEXICALI INTO THE NEW RIVER**

- WHEREAS,** the New River, which flows northward across the International Boundary from Mexico into California's Imperial Valley contains raw and inadequately treated sewage, industrial wastes, trash and other solid wastes from the Mexicali area of Mexico and thus remains one of the most polluted river of its size in California; and
- WHEREAS,** New River water quality has a significant impact on the Salton Sea, which is California largest inland surface water and a water quality priority for the State; and
- WHEREAS,** unsatisfactory abatement of pollution by the United States and Mexico creates a gross environmental injustice situation in the Calexico area and Imperial County; and
- WHEREAS,** the United States Environmental Protection Agency and International Boundary and Water Commission (collectively Federal Government) have been designated by treaties with Mexico as the United States' federal agencies responsible for addressing New River pollution from Mexico; and
- WHEREAS,** the North American Development Bank and Border Environment Cooperation Commission (NADBank/BECC) were created under the North America Free Trade Agreement to provide financial and technical assistance to public agencies to address environmental problems along the US-Mexico Border; and
- WHEREAS,** in late 2007, upon completion of binational projects to rebuild the sewage infrastructure in Mexicali funded, in part, by the Federal Government, there was a significant New River water quality improvement in the border area; and thereafter Mexico made progress in addressing and controlling industrial point sources of New River pollution in the Mexicali area; and
- WHEREAS,** in spite of this progress, the deteriorating condition of the sewage infrastructure is resulting yet again in bypasses of raw sewage into the New River, which in turn undermine the progress made and Salton Sea Management Program; and
- WHEREAS,** since November 2016, there has been an average of one bypass of raw sewage per month. The bypasses have ranged in magnitude from 1-13 million gallons per day. The bypasses pose a serious health threat to California residents and people in the Imperial Valley.

WHEREAS, the price tag for fixing the above-mentioned infrastructure problems is estimated to be \$75M to \$80M; and

WHEREAS, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (Colorado River Basin Water Board) brought to the attention of the Federal Government the severity of this problem in 2014, but lack of effective action could have catastrophic consequences on key sewage collection and pumping facilities that are at risk of failing in Mexicali; and

WHEREAS, equipment, including trailer-mounted trash pumps and package lift stations, is readily available and must be part of the standard assets of any Discharger who owns and/or operates a sewage collection and treatment system to prevent discharges of untreated wastes from broken pipes and pumping facilities; and the equipment is needed in Mexicali to deal with the infrastructure problems; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that acquiring the equipment, which could effectively eliminate the bypasses altogether, and would cost only approximately 1% of the estimated \$80M that is going to take to replace the existing infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, without the aforementioned equipment and the satisfactory abatement and elimination of the raw sewage by the United States and Mexico implementing the New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan's recommendations for Calexico are not feasible; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado River Basin Water Board wishes to continue working cooperatively at all levels of government in the United States and Mexico to address the New River water quality problems.

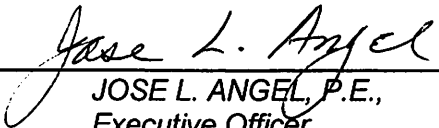
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Colorado River Basin Water Board request the Federal Government and the NADBank/BECC to:

1. Recognizes that the bypasses of raw sewage result in a public health hazard in the Calexico that must be dealt with as an emergency crisis;
2. Enable Mexico to acquire the necessary equipment to prevent additional bypasses of raw sewage into the New River as a matter of priority, before spending any additional United States funds to help replace existing sewage infrastructure in Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States International Boundary and Water Commission, the NADBank/BECC, California Environmental Protection Agency, the State Water Resources Control Board, and to others.

This resolution was adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region, at its regular meeting on May 19, 2017.

I, Jose L. Angel, Executive Officer, do hereby certify the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region, on May 19, 2017.



JOSE L. ANGEL, P.E.,
Executive Officer