



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION  
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
UNITED STATES SECTION

July 16, 2025

David W. Gibson  
Executive Officer  
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board  
2375 Northside Drive, Suite 100  
San Diego, CA 92108

Subject: Request to increase flow at South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) up to 10 million gallons per day (mgd) through the chemically enhanced primary treatment (CEPT)

Dear Mr. Gibson:

Please accept this letter requesting approval from the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to amend the International Boundary and Water Commission's, United States Section, (USIBWC) South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) permit to be able to treat up to an additional 10 Million Gallons per Day (MDG) using Chemically Enhanced Primary Treatment (CEPT) for an incremental increase in total wastewater flow from 25MGD to 35MGD, with the goal of accepting more Mexican wastewater from its municipal system, thus allowing Mexico's system to eliminate dry weather transboundary flows in the Tijuana River. This incremental increase will help eliminate the exposure to hydrogen sulfide and improve water quality by treating more wastewater sooner as the larger 50MDG/75MGD Peaking Factor rehabilitation and expansion project at the SBIWTP continues with design and construction. The USIBWC and the Design-Build (DB) team have developed a conceptual project to treat additional flows with temporary equipment and facilities that can be implemented within 100 days.

Upon entering as Commissioner of USIBWC, I have been working with staff and attending meetings in the U.S. and Mexico to gain a good understanding of the sanitation issues in Tijuana due to wastewater infrastructure that is past its useful life and in disrepair that have significantly impacted the SBIWTP and the Southern California coast. It is unacceptable that untreated wastewater makes its way into the Tijuana River resulting in contaminated transboundary flows that enter the United States and impact public health and the environment. The rehabilitation and expansion project of the SBIWTP is a critical element taking long awaited corrective actions to address these issues. Considering the emergency nature of the environmental, air, and water quality issues, we consider the incremental increase of treating up to 10MGD to advanced primary treatment and blending with secondary treatment as a critical aspect of addressing these concerns as soon as possible, benefiting the U.S. and its citizens by removing Mexican sewage from the Tijuana River.

In addition, the USIBWC, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexican counterparts, have developed a list of projects under IBWC Minute No. 328 that will

achieve a long-term solution to water quality in the Tijuana River and South Bay to provide open beaches and improved public health and water quality. On the U.S. side, the SBIWTP expansion project is underway and in Mexico, the San Antonio de los Buenos WWTP, international bypass collector, Goat Canyon Pump Station No. 1, and Pump Station CILA have been completed.

This emergency specifically impacting the U.S. and its citizens requires an immediate action, and we believe that being able to treat up to an additional 10MGD will reduce the flow in the river by treating more wastewater at the SBIWTP. Since river flows pumped through PBCILA and wastewater flows in the Mexican collection system reach Pumping Plant No. 1 (PB1) at the terminus of the collection system at the border in Tijuana, by treating more wastewater at the SBIWTP, more capacity at PB1 will be available to allow PBCILA to pump the remaining flow from the river to PB1 and ultimately to the Mexican coast. The expected result is significantly reducing or removing Mexican sewage from flowing in the Tijuana River. Our target date to receive this incremental 10MGD increase is by August 28, 2025.

As you consider this request, my team is available to answer any questions and provide any needed data and documentation to assist in determining the Board's best course of action to increase the plant's operation of treating up to 35 MGD. It is also important to note that this concept considers being able to reduce flows back to the permitted 25MGD so as not to harm the plant's existing treatment capacity, should that be necessary.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (915) 832-4101 or contact Principal Engineer Ramon Macias III at (915) 832-4749 or [ramon.macias@ibwc.gov](mailto:ramon.macias@ibwc.gov).

Sincerely,

RAMON  
MACIAS

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MACIAS  
Date: 2025.07.16 15:44:52  
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for

W.C. McIntosh, P.E.  
Commissioner