



# Media Release

## **San Diego Water Board Issues Updated Discharge Permit for the Border Wastewater Treatment Plant**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Joann Lim

**Phone:** (619) 521-3362

With litigation concluded, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board) today issued a much-needed discharge permit update to the United States International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) for its International Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP).

Constructed in 1996, the IWTP treats domestic and industrial wastewater originating in Tijuana and discharges it to the Pacific Ocean about 3.5 miles offshore.

“This permit is a milestone in the collaborative effort among local, state, and federal agencies on both sides of the border to minimize wastewater flows to the Tijuana River and Estuary, and protect our shared ocean waters,” said San Diego Water Board Executive Director Dave Gibson.

The IWTP treats an average daily flow of 25 million gallons per day (mgd) of raw sewage originating from Tijuana, Mexico, and then discharges the secondary treated effluent approximately 3.5 miles out into the Pacific Ocean through the South Bay Ocean Outfall.

The IWTP plays a key role in addressing U.S. and Mexico international border pollution problems. The IWTP and its system of canyon collectors prevent millions of gallons of dry weather flows of raw sewage from flowing daily from Tijuana into the United States and polluting the Tijuana River, the Tijuana River Valley and Estuary, and south San Diego beach coastal waters.

Gibson said the permit conforms with current US Environmental Protection Agency and State regulatory requirements, and adds provisions necessary to promote an adequate wastewater pre-treatment program in Tijuana, while providing for improved reporting and cleanup responses by the USIBWC for certain dry-weather trans boundary flow events.

The San Diego Water Board sued the USIBWC in 2001 over failure to comply with secondary treatment requirements in its 1996 discharge permit. In 2010, the USIBWC significantly upgraded the plant’s treatment technology to secondary treatment resulting in much improved effluent quality. This action paved the way for the San Diego Water Board



to conclude the litigation in June 2013 and begin drafting the updated discharge permit soon thereafter.

The IWTP is located between the Tijuana River and the international border at 2995 Clearwater Way in the City of San Diego.

The San Diego Water Board is comprised of seven part-time members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Water Board's mission is to protect and restore water quality in the southwest portion of the state, including parts of San Diego, Riverside, and Orange counties. For more information visit the regional water board [homepage](#).