Tijuana River Sewage Flows and Pending Remediation

Currently, the flows in the Tijuana River consist largely of untreated sewage, resulting in foaming, air and water quality impacts, and public health risks due to Hydrogen Sulfide exposure. The Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region (San Diego Water Board) shares the community's concerns and is advancing every action within our authority, including enforcement, to end the daily sewage flows into the river from Tijuana, Mexico. We are in regular communication with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (U.S. IBWC) and have expressed our deep concern for the indefensible impact on the human health and to already impaired river, estuary, and coastal waters.

Pipeline PB1A Repairs in Mexico

The most immediate reduction of polluted flows will be realized when the ongoing repairs to a pipeline in Tijuana (PB1A) are completed by November 2023. This repair will immediately reduce the flows in the Tijuana River by 30 million gallons per day (mgd, 75-100% of daily flows) and allow IBWC to expedite repairs to the U.S. IBWC South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (ITP).

This pipeline conveys flows diverted from the Tijuana River (PBCILA) and untreated wastewater in the collection system to be discharged on the coast in Mexico at Punta Bandera. In July 2022, this pipeline failed in Matadero Cañon and damaged pipeline PB1B immediately next to it. PB1B was promptly repaired, but repairs to PB1A were delayed due to its proximity to the border fence, which required federal approvals in both countries, and technical challenges due to an extremely steep slope.

Figure 1: Repairs to PB1A Underway in Matadero Cañon, Mexico

At the repeated urging of the U.S. IBWC, Mexico has accelerated the repair of the PB1A pipeline and anticipate its completion by November 2023 instead of mid-2024 as

previously planned. Restoration of PB1A will allow agencies in Mexico to reactivate the PBCILA diversion of 30 mgd of Tijuana River flows and move more sewage in the collection system to Punta Bandera, reducing daily flows in the Tijuana River by 75%-100%.

The San Diego Water Board will continue to encourage the federal agencies to work with Mexico to prevent any further delays to the repairs.

Repairs to the South Bay ITP

The IBWC reported that $18 million dollars in repairs are underway to address pre-and - post tropical cyclone Hilary equipment failures. The repairs will require 9-12 months to complete due to supply chain interruptions. An additional $32 million will be spent to increase capacity and system reliability to handle very high inflows from Mexico during storm events. These improvements are an early installation of the proposed expansion of the ITP from 25 mgd to 50 mgd and will be retained in the construction of treatment plant. Expansion is expected to be completed in 2028 and will help ensure daily flows in the Tijuana River are curtailed.

The Hollister Avenue Pump Station daily delivers polluted dry weather flows from Goat Canyon and Smuggler's Gulch to the ITP for treatment. The structure was damaged during the tropical cyclone Hilary and all four pumps were lost. Two new pumps have been installed (photos below) and the pumps station was returned to operation on Sept. 29, 2023 (photo below). A third pump has just been delivered (10-10-23) and will be installed. With two pumps operating, and a third in standby, transboundary flows of polluted water in Goat Canyon and Smuggler's Gulch are once again being pumped to the ITP for treatment.

The San Diego Water Board plans to release an enforcement order in late October for public review and comment. The tentative order is intended to ensure the repairs are completed on schedule and the ITP restored to compliance with the Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit as soon as possible.

Expansion of the ITP

U.S. EPA and U.S. IBWC are proceeding with the procurement process for a design firm and plan to have a contract in place to begin design/planning work on the ITP. The ITP will be expanded from 25mgd to 50mgd with a peak flow capacity of 75mgd. Other components including sludge digestion and energy co-generation are still being considered if funding is available. ITP expansion construction is expected to start in 2025 and be complete by 2028.

Equally important is the construction of a Tijuana River Diversion Advanced Primary Treatment Plant to treat flows diverted from the Tijuana River at PBCILA that are

presently discharged on the coast at Punta Bandera when PB1A is operational. This project is critical to preventing future non-storm flows like those experienced by residents all year in 2023. Funding for this part of the Record of Decision has not been authorized or allocated by Congress.

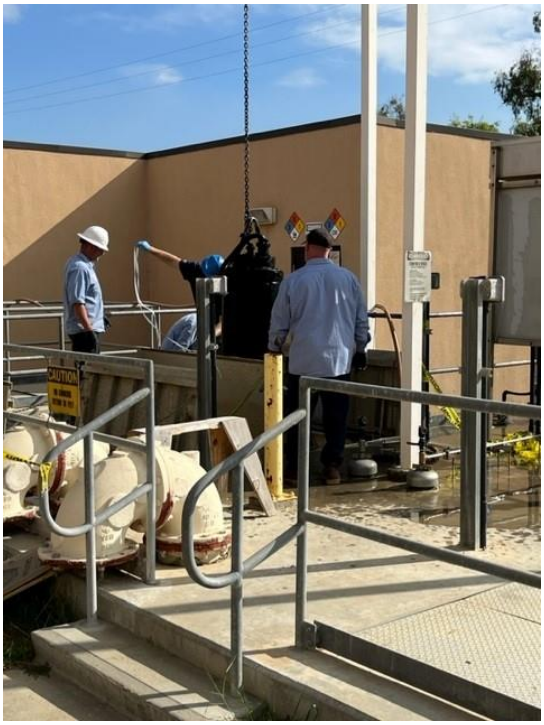

Figure 1: Pump Damaged by Tropical Cyclone Hilary

Figure 2: New Pump for Hollister Ave. Pump Sta on

Figure 3: Goat Canyon Collector Restored to Opera on 09-29-23

Repairs to the International Collector and the Tijuana River Diversion Infrastructure in Tijuana, Baja California

The International Collector is a sewage line connection service line from Tijuana to the PB1A/1B Pump Station in Tijuana and the ITP in San Ysidro. Repair is critical to restoring the full operation of the PBCILA Tijuana River Diversion Pump Station and the safe operation of the ITP. The International Collector is damaged and high flows result in discharges to the Tijuana River via Stewart's Drain. Repairs are already underway and approximately 20% complete. Repairs started in August and are 20% complete.

Additional improvements to the International Collector and pump station will be considered for certification by the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank on or after **Nov. 3, 2023**. Comments can be submitted here and are due **Nov. 2, 2023**. The information on this project has been posted on NADB's Homepage.