

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-48

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORONADO, CALIFORNIA, ASSERTING THE NECESSITY AND URGENCY TO RESOLVE CROSS BORDER WATER POLLUTION AND RESTORE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ACCESS TO COASTAL WATERS

WHEREAS, the cross border flows of untreated wastewater from the Tijuana River and the inoperative San Antonio de los Buenos Wastewater Treatment Plant constitute an environmental catastrophe, polluting ocean waters and adversely impacting the lives of residents and visitors in the South Bay region, including the City of Coronado; and

WHEREAS, impaired water quality and the closure of South Bay beaches, including Coronado beaches carries far-reaching negative consequences, and it is imperative that this international problem be addressed swiftly to restore clean coastal waters for our environment and wildlife and provide safe access to our residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, contaminated flows are directed through treatment plants under the jurisdictions of the U.S. and Mexico federal governments which have failing and aging infrastructure. The U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) operates the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP), and additional funding is needed to improve and expand the plant, along with improvements to the San Antonio de los Buenos Wastewater Treatment Plant in Mexico and canyon collection systems on both sides of the border; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that the total costs for the necessary infrastructure improvements could exceed \$1 billion for projects in the United States and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the City of Coronado has tirelessly advocated for solutions and additional infrastructure funding since 2016, working closely with other regional partners and Coronado's state and federal delegation, and in 2017, the City obtained the services of a Washington D.C.-based advocacy firm to amplify Coronado's message and voice; and

WHEREAS, since 2017, the City Council designated Councilmembers to serve as City representatives on cross-border pollution, charging them to carry the urgency for action and advocate for solutions in Washington, DC, and recently the City Council authorized a formal City Council Ad Hoc Committee on Cross Border Water Quality on April 2, 2023 and reauthorized the Committee on February 6, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City Council authorized a Councilmember representative to the National League of Cities' (NLC) Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, and advocated for the adoption of an NLC resolution in support of infrastructure projects to address transboundary water pollution, which is part of the NCL's 2024 platform on behalf of cities nationwide; and

WHEREAS, a Coronado Councilmember was appointed to the IBWC Citizen's Form, an advisory board to facilitate the exchange of information between the IBWC and members of the public, government agencies, and other interested stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the City of Coronado requested and continues to host the IBWC Citizen's Forum meetings in Coronado to increase transparency and resident engagement to ensure Coronado's voice is resonant and persistent in this dialogue; and

WHEREAS, Councilmembers and City staff remain actively engaged in tracking and advocating for positive outcomes, holding frequent and ongoing meetings and traveling to Mexico and Washington, D.C. to personally bring the urgent case for action to representatives from the U.S. Congress, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S State Department and Mexican government, and advocate for additional funding of wastewater infrastructure and exchange information on the status of construction projects; and

WHEREAS, the City Council's continued engagement with a variety of stakeholders and the collective efforts of the South Bay and San Diego area are delivering results, such as the tranches of federal funding for IBWC's water quality construction projects and the demonstrable action in Mexico with the government's rehabilitation of the San Antonio de los Buenos Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is slated for completion in September 2024 and will restore daily treatment to over 20 million gallons of wastewater; and

WHEREAS, the City is dedicated to clean beaches, clean water and a healthy environment for its residents and visitors and urges the fastest possible timeline for the completion of the U.S. and Mexican water quality construction projects as well as the ongoing prioritization by the U.S. Congress to fund construction projects and establish sufficient ongoing maintenance for the future; and

WHEREAS, the collective efforts of the local, state, federal and Mexican governments to solve transboundary pollution must be persistent and at the forefront of legislative priorities, and the City of Coronado will continue its focused attention through to the resolution of this crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Coronado as follows:

1. That the above recitations are true.
2. The City of Coronado finds it imperative and a matter of extreme urgency that cross border water pollution is resolved, and the City's support will be unwavering with continued advocacy, attention and resolute Councilmember and City staff efforts.
3. The City of Coronado calls on the Federal and State governments to make resolving cross border water pollution an apex priority, and once achieved, to ensure robust and ongoing maintenance of all infrastructure systems to prevent any recurrence of pollution to the environment.
4. The City of Coronado finds that additional funding is needed from the Federal Government to immediately repair and augment the sewer infrastructure in the United States and Mexico to stop further cross border water pollution and protect the health of residents, wildlife, and the environment within South Bay and Baja California.

PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Coronado, California, at a regular meeting thereof this Third day of September 2024 by the following vote to wit:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

APPROVED:

RICHARD BAILEY, Mayor of the
City of Coronado, California

ATTEST:

KELSEA HOLIAN, City Clerk of the
City of Coronado, California