



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

SJR-18 Tijuana River: pollution. (2023-2024)

SHARE THIS:  

Senate Joint Resolution No. 18

CHAPTER 175

Relative to the Tijuana River.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 21, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 18, Padilla. Tijuana River: pollution.

This measure would request that the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conduct further investigation into the concerns raised regarding potential health impacts attributed to pollution in the Tijuana River.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The Tijuana River, which flows east to west from Mexico into California and drains into the Pacific Ocean through the Tijuana Estuary, has for decades experienced an increased discharge of trash, sediment, and wastewater generated on the Mexico side, which, as a result of sewage infrastructure inadequacies, has created recurring and worsening pollution problems for the County of San Diego and the southern California coastline; and

WHEREAS, This past January, a storm surge caused 14.5 billion gallons of raw sewage and pollution to wash up on the banks of the river, as well as overflow into the nearby coastal wetlands, one of the few remaining such ecosystems left in southern California; and

WHEREAS, The City of Imperial Beach has declared a continued state of emergency since 2017 as a result of the escalated discharge of raw sewage from the City of Tijuana, Mexico, that has caused numerous health problems and significant beach closure days at Imperial Beach, which include 101 days in 2018, 243 days in 2019, 295 days in 2020, and 246 days in 2021, and the beach has yet to open since December 2021; and

WHEREAS, The County of San Diego, on June 27, 2023, declared a local emergency due to the public health, environmental, and economic impacts of the cross-border pollution disaster; and

WHEREAS, The San Diego County Air Pollution Control District has deployed air monitors in the communities surrounding the Tijuana River Valley that have shown levels of sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide above standards set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency; and

WHEREAS, Californians who live and work in communities such as Imperial Beach, Nestor, San Ysidro, and the Tijuana River Valley have reported headaches, chronic cough, diarrhea, vomiting, and other symptoms, particularly after heavy rains when more sewage hits the riverbed and when odors seem stronger during hot and dry days; and

WHEREAS, Research by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, attributed 34,000 annual illnesses to water quality pollution along the City of Imperial Beach coastline in the County of San Diego, and linked up to 76 percent of bacteria in the City of Imperial Beach air to cross-border water pollution, and data from medical clinics in the City of Imperial Beach shows a significant increase in cases of diarrhea and other intestinal problems during significant cross-border flow events; and

WHEREAS, Flesh-eating bacteria and other dangerous pathogens have been linked to Tijuana River pollution and the exposure to raw human sewage, massive coliform bacteria contamination, and toxic chemicals; and

WHEREAS, A 2023 study conducted by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, showed sea spray associated with pollution in the Tijuana River carries dangerous bacteria and chemical compounds inland through tiny aerosolized particles that can reach people on land; and

WHEREAS, The risk of acute infectious diseases and chronic conditions is potentially high, but not well understood, indicating a public health crisis with the possibility for long-term impacts on health, society, and the economy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature requests the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct further investigation into the concerns raised regarding potential health impacts attributed to pollution in the Tijuana River; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and to the Director of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.