



September 21, 2022

ITEM TITLE: RESOLUTION 2022-69 CONTINUING THE PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY RELATING TO IMPACTS FROM CROSS-BORDER POLLUTION IN THE TIJUANA RIVER. (0150-40 & 0210-26)

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:

Environmental & Natural Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Resolution continues the City's proclamation for a state of local emergency related to the cross-border pollution impacts from the Tijuana River including the persistent impacts of treated and untreated wastewater. The Imperial Beach shoreline from the south end of Seacoast Drive to the border was closed for 246 days in 2021, 295 days in 2020, 245 days in 2019, 101 days in 2018, 168 days in 2017, 162 days in 2016, and 211 days in 2015 due to contaminated flows in the Tijuana River. Cross border flows in the Tijuana River continue to persist and impact the Tijuana River valley, Estuary, and beach water quality.

It is necessary to have a local state of emergency in order for the City to respond to unpredictable conditions in the Tijuana River that impact the health, safety, and welfare of Imperial Beach residents, visitors, and environment. Proclamations that set in place a state of local emergency will expire in 60 days unless the City passes a continuing resolution to continue the local state of emergency.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. 2022-69 to maintain a state of local emergency related to the cross-border pollution impacts from the Tijuana River and authorize the City Manager, Mayor, and Council members to work with local, State, Federal, and Mexican authorities to advance binational projects to improve conditions in the Tijuana River.

OPTIONS:

- Adopt Resolution and recommendation from staff;
- Reject Resolution; or
- Request additional information and an additional report

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The health and safety risks from cross border pollution levels in the Tijuana River and lack of action to implement known solutions by Federal and State agencies provides sufficient evidence to declare a state of local emergency within the City.

The City of Imperial Beach is severely impacted by the persistent flow of pollutants in the Tijuana River that impacts the health, safety, and welfare of citizens and wildlife. Pollution in the River is most acute following rain events or illegal discharge events when the watershed transforms into a severely impacted, polluted, and hazardous waterbody with bacterial concentrations so elevated it is often difficult to quantify effectively. The associated impact on the surrounding ecosystem is severe with poor water quality lasting several days to months after each discharge event. The recreational impact on the Imperial Beach shoreline is equally severe with beach closures impacting the beneficial ocean uses for residents and visitors in the City.

Both the City of Imperial Beach and City of San Diego maintain an ongoing state of emergency resolution for the Tijuana River. This resolution allows our agencies the flexibility to respond to unpredictable conditions in the Tijuana River to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents, visitors, and the environment. The City Council has the authority to issue a local state of emergency that will expire in 60 days or continue in effect until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting unless renewed by a continuing resolution.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Not a project as defined by CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution 2022-69