

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
BUDGET
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
JUDICIARY
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

April 9, 2024

Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, P.E.
Commissioner, United States
International Boundary and Water Commission
4191 North Mesa St.
El Paso, TX 79902-1423

The Honorable Michael Connor
Assistant Secretary for Civil Works
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
Chief of Engineers and Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Commissioner Giner, Secretary Connor, and Lt. General Spellmon:

Thank you for your work so far to address transboundary sewage in the Tijuana River watershed and at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP). With the passage of recent appropriations and the consideration of the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, I am writing to request an update on the rehabilitation and expansion of the SBIWTP and to follow up on my questions during the February 28 Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing.

I am proud to have secured a \$103 million increase to the Fiscal Year 2024 Construction Budget for the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), which in combination with \$300 million secured in the US-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) Agreement in 2020 represent important steps towards addressing a decades-long public health and environmental crisis that has created airborne and waterborne hazards for local communities and our military personnel. As I said in my hearing remarks, rehabilitating and expanding SBIWTP is critical to public health, national security, and environmental protection. Beyond more federal funding, it is clear that federal agencies need to act as one in order to comprehensively address this situation as soon as possible. I am glad to see to hear that during the design-build contractor procurement process USACE has been important partner to the USIBWC, which I am told plans to award the contract later this summer to commence project design and construction.

To understand the plan to address both repair and rehabilitation, as well as the expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, I am seeking written responses to the following questions:

- What is USIBWC's plan to implement newly appropriated FY24 construction funding and remaining USMCA funds?
- What role can or will USACE play in contracting, procurement, design, and construction of the SBIWTP expansion?

- How does USIBWC and USACE plan to leverage USACE and Corps Civil Works engineering and contracting expertise to help USIBWC make these critical infrastructure repairs and upgrades to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant as soon as possible?

I am also working with my colleagues in the House to secure new Corps authorities in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act to leverage the Corps' environmental infrastructure and ecosystem restoration expertise to mitigate pollution in disadvantaged communities like Imperial Beach and in the Tijuana River watershed.

Thank you for attention to the rehabilitation and expansion needs of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Administration's focus on air and water pollution impacts within disadvantaged communities, and your continued partnership on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Padilla". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "P".

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

