



June 5, 2026

Delivered via email

To: Meagan Harmon, Chair, California Coastal Commission
CC: Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director, California Coastal Commission,
Energy, Ocean Resources, and Federal Consistency Unit

Re: W11a, Application No. 9-26-0389 (San Diego County)

Dear Chair Harmon, Commissioners, and EORFC Staff,

The Tijuana River Coalition submits this letter in strong support of Coastal Development Permit Application No. 9-26-0389, and to express our gratitude to Commission staff for their thorough and thoughtful work on this item.

The Tijuana River Coalition is a growing coalition of over 65 nonprofit and community-based organizations representing residents, youth, workers, families, scientists, doctors, businesses, and recreators throughout San Diego County and Tijuana. We are dedicated to addressing the severe environmental and public health crisis caused by transboundary pollution in the Tijuana River Watershed located in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

The Saturn Boulevard crossing of the Tijuana River has become ground zero for one of the most serious environmental justice crises in the United States. Fast-moving, sewage-contaminated water is releasing hydrogen sulfide and other toxic air pollutants at concentrations several times higher than state standards, directly next to neighborhoods with homes, schools, and businesses. The communities bearing this burden – including low-income households, immigrant communities, Latino and Tribal populations, and children – have been exposed to inhumane conditions for far too long while awaiting meaningful action. The Tijuana River Coalition has represented and worked alongside impacted communities to demand exactly the kind of response this project represents.

We are grateful that the Commission is taking up this application and appreciate the care staff has taken in developing conditions that protect coastal resources while advancing an urgent public health goal. In particular, we want to acknowledge the conditions addressing sensitive habitat and special-status species in the Tijuana River riparian corridor, water quality protections during construction, and the requirement that public access along the California Coastal Trail on Saturn Boulevard be maintained continuously throughout the project.

While the culvert extensions are only proposed as an interim measure, they still represent a necessary and welcome step to provide relief to suffering communities while a longer-term solution

is planned and funded. The Coalition will continue to advocate for the comprehensive, long-term fix this region deserves, and we look forward to remaining engaged as that work progresses.

Finally, we want to raise one practical concern on behalf of the coalition. Special Condition 1 requires the County to secure authorizations from a significant list of federal, state, and local agencies before construction can begin. This list includes the U.S. Navy, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. We recognize this is a standard and appropriate requirement. However, given the urgency of the public health situation, equitable access issues, and the complexity of coordinating across this many jurisdictions, we respectfully ask that Commission staff offer whatever assistance and coordination is within their capacity to help the County navigate that process efficiently. Every day of delay has real consequences for real people.

Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting access to California's coast and the communities who depend on it. We urge the Commission to approve Application No. 9-26-0389 as conditioned.

Respectfully,

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