Message

From: Stoker, Michael B. [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DCB64B4E7EDF48AABE8EF43996A4652E-STOKER, MIC]
Sent: 12/12/2019 3:15:17 PM
To: Jayne Harkins [Jayne.Harkins@ibwc.gov]
CC: McIntosh, Chad [mcintosh.chad@epa.gov]
Subject: Re: USMCA has $300M to expand SBIWTP

And we look forward to working with you Jayne. I've been working for this day since the first day I was sworn in.

Best regards,
Mike Stoker
Southwest Region Administrator US-EPA
Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

On Dec 12, 2019, at 7:09 AM, Jayne Harkins <Jayne.Harkins@ibwc.gov> wrote:

Congrats!!!! I look forward to working with you on this.

Jayne Harkins, P.E.
Commissioner, U. S. Section
International Boundary and
Water Commission
Office 915-832-4101
Cell Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

USMCA trade deal includes $300M for cross-border pollution

Posted: 6:52 PM, Dec 11, 2019

Updated: 7:52 PM, Dec 11, 2019

By: City News Service

SAN DIEGO (CNS) - The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement trade deal includes $300 million in funding to address cross-border pollution in the Tijuana River Valley, San Diego's congressional delegation announced Wednesday.

The funding would be dispersed in four annual installments of $75 million in the form of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants under its Border Water Infrastructure Program. In June, the

fiscal year 2020 federal budget for the BWIP was only $30 million, according to the office of Rep. Scott Peters, D-San Diego.

``The USMCA delivers a massive funding investment that can fix the Tijuana River's sewage spills once and for all," Peters said. ``This funding can stop the environmental crisis that has plagued our community for decades and will improve public health."

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The bulk of the funding would be used to expand and upgrade the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, operated by the International Boundary and Water Commission. The funding would be used to fortify the plant's water treatment capabilities, allowing it to stanch flows of polluted storm and wastewater into the river.

``Cross border pollution is a nightmare for our community and for the individuals that work and recreate near the border," Imperial Beach Mayor Serge Dedina said. ``This funding is a critical step towards cleaning up the contamination in the Tijuana River Valley and making our beach safe for surfers and others who enjoy our coast."

Transborder pollution from the Tijuana River has contaminated U.S. waters and coastlines for decades, forcing San Diego County environmental health officials to regularly close beach access near the border. During that time, local and state officials and environmental activists have called for federal assistance to protect the health of the environment and residents near the border.

In April, Sens. Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein, D-California, submitted a jointly written letter to multiple federal agencies requesting they address sewage runoff in the river.

In July, Peters and Reps. Juan Vargas, D-San Diego, and Mike Levin, D- Oceanside, introduced legislation to increase funding for Tijuana River cleanup efforts and prevention of future pollution. And in September, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce's annual delegation of local officials and business leaders discussed the issue with cabinet officials and members of Congress.

``This environmental issue has plagued our region for generations and this funding will take major strides in helping us address health and ecological challenges we face," Levin said. ``Along with my colleagues, I made it clear to the Trump administration and House Democratic leadership that it is long past time that we make robust investments in cleaning up polluted water that flows over the border."

The San Diego chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and the city of San Diego have also filed lawsuits against the IBWC, arguing that it has neglected pollution in the river and its effect on the environment. The city jointly filed its lawsuit with California Attorney General Xavier Becerra.

The pending funding is a result of Tuesday's deal between congressional Democrats and the White House to support a revised USMCA. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, said the modified trade agreement includes more strenuous labor and environmental standards for the three countries.

House Democrats are now expected to vote for the deal's ratification and send it to the Republican-controlled Senate.

The USMCA would replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect in 1994 and is blamed by some politicians on both sides of the aisle for hastening outsourcing and the decline of the country's manufacturing industries.

President Donald Trump, who campaigned on retooling NAFTA, has faced pushback from members of Congress for much of the year for elements of the original deal like tariffs on steel and aluminum and its enforcement provisions.

Local business leaders and elected officials have sung the deal's praises for months, arguing that inter-border commerce is too vital to the San Diego region to sever trade relations between the U.S. and Mexico.

The current U.S. legislature and Canadian parliament must still approve the deal for it to go into effect. The Mexican legislature ratified it earlier this year.

``We've been pushing for this modernized trade agreement and now it's here, in a way that sets up San Diego to win big," San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer said. ``More free trade and less pollution at the border -- it's what San Diego needs and it looks like it's what San Diego is going to get."

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Sally E. Spener

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