

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, JUNE 04, 2024**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 19

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY AIR QUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT
RELIEF: PROCUREMENT OF AIR PURIFIERS RELATED TO THE
TIJUANA RIVER POLLUTION CRISIS (DISTRICT: 1)**

OVERVIEW

For decades, South County communities have endured significant impacts from transboundary pollutants, including sediment, trash, and raw sewage that flow across the border into the Tijuana River Valley and neighboring areas like Imperial Beach and Nestor. The combination of inadequate, aging infrastructure and increasingly frequent climate-related emergencies has resulted in severe environmental, economic, and property damage from persistent cross-border sewage pollution and contaminated ocean waters.

Additionally, ambient odors have further diminished the quality of life for South County residents. According to the Air Pollution Control District (APCD), these odors, while posing minimal health risks in low quantities, can cause serious health issues in higher concentrations. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that exposure to these compounds at high levels can lead to dizziness, headaches, insomnia, nausea, eye irritation, asthma, and other health problems.

In response to this crisis, the Board of Supervisors declared a local emergency on June 27, 2023, and directed staff to pursue all available federal and state funding sources. The Board also instructed staff to collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as stakeholders, to develop projects and innovative solutions to address the root causes of the pollution. On the other hand, APCD installed AQ Mesh sensors near the Tijuana River Valley in October of last year to monitor the different compounds that are being emitted into the air.

Today's actions aim to provide immediate relief from the Tijuana River crisis by seeking funding opportunities for the procurement of air purifiers to mitigate the odors caused by sewage flows. The County would make these air purifiers available to individuals impacted by the ambient odors. These short-term measures are part of a broader effort to alleviate the impacts on our communities while long-term solutions continue being developed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS

1. Waive Board Policy A-72 Agenda and Related Process, Section 2.k.ii, which establishes required timelines for review when preparing a Board letter.
2. Find that the proposed actions are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the recommended actions are administrative in nature and not a project as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).
3. Direct the Interim Chief Administrative Officer to explore funding options for the procurement of air purifiers to address the odors and air pollutants from the Tijuana River Valley emergency.

4. Pursuant to Government Code section 26227, and subject to the availability of funding:
 - a. direct the Interim Chief Administrative Officer to establish a program to provide air purifiers to residents of the South County impacted by ambient odors;
 - b. find that such a program is necessary to meet the social needs of the population;
 - c. authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to procure air purifiers in support of such program; and
 - d. authorize the Interim Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to take any other action necessary to implement and operate such a program.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The communities closest to the San Diego International Border, including the communities of Imperial Beach, San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Tijuana River Valley are identified by SB 535 (2012) and CalEnviroScreen 4.0 as being Environmental Justice communities having high pollution burdens for impaired water bodies and elevated PM2.5, and poverty rates. The proposed efforts to explore funding options for the procurement of air purifiers will result in a positive impact on the residents affected by this crisis.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action to explore funding opportunities for air purifiers will contribute to the health and well-being of South County residents, an underserved community, that has limited access to recreational activities due to the current pollution crisis affecting South County Beaches and protected areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's request. There may be future fiscal impacts based on recommendations from today's action and any such recommendations would return back for consideration and approval by the Board. Upon return by staff, funding for future costs will need to be identified by the department and will proceed once identified. At this time, there will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Vargas, seconded by Supervisor Anderson, the Board of Supervisors took the following actions:

1. Waived Board Policy A-72 Agenda and Related Process, Section 2.k.ii, which establishes required timelines for review when preparing a Board letter.
2. Found that the proposed actions are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the recommended actions are administrative in nature and not a project as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).
3. Directed the Interim Chief Administrative Officer to explore funding options for the procurement of air purifiers to address the odors and air pollutants from the Tijuana River Valley emergency with funding capped at \$100,000.

4. Pursuant to Government Code section 26227, and subject to the availability of funding:
 - a. directed the Interim Chief Administrative Officer to establish a program to provide air purifiers to residents of the South County impacted by ambient odors;
 - b. found that such a program is necessary to meet the social needs of the population;
 - c. authorized the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to procure air purifiers in support of such program; and
 - d. authorized the Interim Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to take any other action necessary to implement and operate such a program.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter