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January 22, 2002

The Honorable Dick Murphy
and Members of the San Diego City Council
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: January 22, 2002 Council Agenda – Item 201
South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant – Options for Secondary Treatment
Support for Bajagua Project

Dear Mayor Murphy and Honorable Council Members:

The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce has a long history working with the people of Baja California and the City of Tijuana on issues of mutual concern. One such issue that has become extremely important is a solution to the raw sewage problem flowing across the international border into the United States.

Since the 1930s, Tijuana's rapid population and economic growth has outpaced its ability to control its waste. Tijuana's raw sewage is a leading cause of the contamination of the Tijuana River Basin, Estuary, and beaches of South Bay San Diego. This problem has resulted in a history of emergency beach closures in San Diego, impacting our local economy, human health, and the environment. The existing facilities lack the capacity to treat all of the wastewater and, further, it is not being treated to meet applicable Mexican and U.S. standards. To address this problem, the United States and Mexico have entered into a treaty agreement (Minute 283) to cooperate in the construction of sewage transport and treatment facilities. While the advanced primary treatment component has been completed, the secondary component has been delayed because (a) Congress became concerned about the significant cost over-runs on the primary plant (International Wastewater Treatment Plant) and (b) the capacity of the plant did not adequately address the treatment needs in the region and thus did not stop the raw sewage flows from crossing the border.

This continuing problem needs to be resolved as soon as possible. The Chamber believes that a solution to the raw sewage problem flowing across our border is the completion of the **Bajagua Project**, a privately-financed wastewater treatment plant to be built in Mexico which will treat between 50 and 75 million gallons per day of sewage generated in Tijuana. The facility could provide upwards of 37,000 acre-feet of reclaimed water per year, which represents 56% of Tijuana's current usage. At 75 mgd, the percentage jumps to approximately 85% of Tijuana's current demand. We further understand that the Bajagua plant will comply with all U.S., California and Mexican clean water and environmental standards and additionally will be monitored by the responsible U.S. and California Agencies.

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We believe that the Bajagua Project represents the best chance for our region to finally come to terms with the sewage treatment deficit in Tijuana that constantly impacts San Diego residents. It will also provide the opportunity for Mexico to have a reliable source of reclaimed water to help offset potable resources that are in very short supply. For these reasons, our Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed the Bajagua Project.

On behalf of the Chamber and our 3,300 members, we respectfully ask your support of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eugene Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Eugene Mitchell
Vice President, Public Policy

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