



EMERALD PLAZA
402 West Broadway, Suite 1000
San Diego, California 92101-3585
Tel 619.544.1300
Fax 619.234.0571
www.sdchamber.org

December 11, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce has a long history working with the people of Mexico and the City of Tijuana on issues of mutual concern. One such issue that has become extremely important is the completion of the Bajagua Project -- a solution to the raw sewage problem flowing across the international border into the United States. However, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) is refusing to initiate negotiations with Mexico, thereby unduly delaying this privately financed wastewater treatment project.

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. Therefore, our Board of Directors has endorsed the Bajagua Project. This plant will treat an average daily flow of 25 million gallons per day (mgd) of advanced primary effluent from the International Wastewater Treatment Plant at the border and have the capacity to accept peak flows up to 50 mgd. 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. The Bajagua plant will comply with U.S., Mexico and California laws for secondary water.

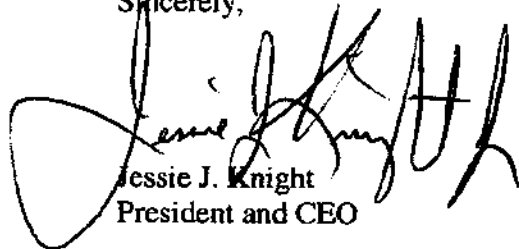
The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
Page 2
December 11, 2001

Unfortunately, the IBWC is obstructing the Bajagua Project, which has the support of the U.S. Congress, the City of San Diego, the City of Tijuana and the Tia Juana River Valley County Water District and Mexican officials. 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, as well as provide the opportunity for Mexico to have a reliable source of reclaimed water to help offset potable resources that are in very short supply.

Therefore, on behalf of the Chamber and our 3,500 members, we respectfully ask your help in urging IBWC Commissioner Carlos Ramirez and the IBWC to move the project forward.

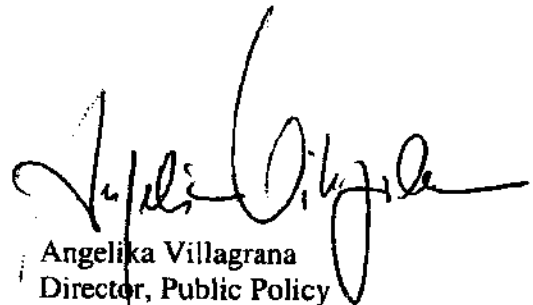
Mr. President, thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Jessie J. Knight
President and CEO

JJK:av



Angelika Villagrana
Director, Public Policy