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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
52nd District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
RANKING MEMBER, TASK FORCE ON
MONETARY POLICY, TREASURY MARKET RESILIENCE,
AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
ILLICIT FINANCE, AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for the SD CoastalWATCH — Coastal Air and Water Quality Monitoring, Early Warning, and Health Protection System project in fiscal year 2027, in the amount of \$1,800,000. The entity to receive the funding is the Regents of the University of California, located at 9500 Gilman Drive #0210, La Jolla, CA 92093-0210.

This project would maintain and expand a continuous, real-time air and water quality monitoring network in the persistently polluted Tijuana River Valley, South Bay, and City of San Diego. The requested funds will support the purchase and development of a mobile laboratory to map contamination across the South Bay from the Tijuana River Estuary to the ocean and coastline. The project builds on past research that found pollutants in the ocean are released into the atmosphere by providing a persistent, mobile laboratory to collect the data needed to develop a coupled air-sea pollution model. This request would fund the critical sustaining and expansion phase of UC San Diego's multi-year coastal monitoring effort. This phase will maintain the fixed monitoring network, fill instrumentation gaps, and expand spatial coverage via mobile laboratory deployment, transitioning the project into a durable, publicly accountable coastal monitoring system.

This project is a good use of federal funds because the Tijuana River pollution crisis is the most severe, persistent, and documentable coastal public health emergency in California's 52nd Congressional District — and it remains critically under-measured. Federal and state governments have committed significant public funds to Tijuana River wastewater infrastructure and efforts to remediate cross-border pollution, and without independent, sustained monitoring, there is no scientifically credible mechanism to determine whether those investments are producing measurable reductions in human exposure along the U.S. coastal zone. This project provides that accountability function. Real-time monitoring would enable timely public warnings, more precise beach closure and reopening decisions, and faster emergency response— reducing harm and the downstream costs associated with unmanaged exposure events.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 16 U.S.C. § 1451 et seq.

This project has broad support from a large network of partners and stakeholders, including County Supervisor Paloma Aguirre.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

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Thank you for your consideration of funding for these programs. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Senior Legislative Assistant, Michael Rivas, at michael.rivas@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas".

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress