

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT; NOTICE OF VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING; REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

USMCA MITIGATION OF CONTAMINATED TRANSBOUNDARY FLOWS PROJECT

Public Scoping Meeting: April 20, 2021, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT)

Summary: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) Mitigation of Contaminated Transboundary Flows project (the Project). The USMCA Project involves the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure to reduce transboundary flows of untreated wastewater (sewage), trash, and sediment that routinely enter the U.S. from Mexico via the Tijuana River, its tributaries, and across the maritime boundary along the San Diego County coast. These transboundary flows impact public health and the environment and have been linked to beach closures along the San Diego County coast. EPA intends to evaluate project options located in the Tijuana River area in southern San Diego County, California in the U.S. and in the Tijuana region in Mexico.

EPA has identified a set of 10 project options that have the potential (individually or in combination) to reduce these transboundary flows. While EPA has not yet identified the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS, EPA anticipates that each alternative (including the preferred alternative) will consist of one or more project options. For descriptions of these 10 project options, please see the project website: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/usmca-tijuana-river-watershed>.

EPA published a notice in the Federal Register on April 5, 2021 initiating the scoping process by inviting comments from federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, interested stakeholders and the public to help identify the environmental issues and project options to be examined in the EIS. EPA has established a 45-day public comment period for the scoping process, which concludes on May 20, 2021. EPA is also providing notice of the public scoping meeting that is open to all interested parties. The scoping meeting will be held virtually on April 20, 2021. For more information regarding the public scoping meeting, please see the project website listed above.

Once the scoping process is complete, EPA will prepare a draft EIS and will publish a Federal Register notice announcing its public availability. EPA will provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft EIS. After EPA considers those comments, EPA will prepare the final EIS and similarly announce its availability and solicit public review and comment. Comments received during the draft EIS review period will be made available in the final EIS. The draft EIS is expected to be released in December 2021.

Where Comments May be Submitted: Written comments shall be submitted to EPA by 5:00 p.m. (PDT) on May 20, 2021 to the following e-mail address: Tijuana-Transboundary-EIS@epa.gov.

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