

ALEX PADILLA

U.S. SENATOR *for* CALIFORNIA

Border Water Quality Restoration and Protection Act of 2024

Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Rep. Juan Vargas (D-Calif.-52)

Purpose of the bill:

- Implement Recommendations of the Government Accountability Office's February 2020 Report, "International Boundary and Water Commission: Opportunities Exist to Address Water Quality Problems" to improve coordination and strategic planning between federal, state, and local agencies to address long-standing, systemic water infrastructure and pollution issues in the Tijuana River Valley and New River watersheds.
- Establish new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Geographic Program for the Tijuana River Valley and New River watersheds.

Summary of the bill:

- Directs the EPA, in coordination with relevant Federal, State, Tribal, and Local governments, to implement a comprehensive water quality management program for the Tijuana River and New River watersheds within 180 days.
- Requires EPA and its partners to identify a consensus list of priority projects, including incorporating a comprehensive suite of projects identified by EPA and the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) in the 2022 [USMCA implementation plan](#), as well as the construction and operations and maintenance costs associated with them.
- **Transfer authority:** Authorizes EPA to accept and distribute funds to Federal, State, Tribal, and local partners to construct, operate, and maintain the identified priority projects.
- Provides for **technical assistance** for restoration and protection activities to Federal, state, Tribal, and local stakeholders.
- **Codifies the U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP)** to fund water infrastructure projects that benefit U.S. communities.
- Authorizes the IBWC to address stormwater and to accept funding made available by the bill.