



## CITY OF SAN DIEGO

September 14, 2017

**Mayor Kevin Faulconer  
County of San Diego  
Army Corps of Engineers  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Regional Water Quality Control Board**

To Whom It May Concern:

The deadly spread of Hepatitis A can only be fully addressed when the Federal, State, County and City of San Diego agencies work together to share resources and responsibility to halt the spread of the disease. Recently, sanitization efforts have begun in downtown San Diego, however, the San Diego Riverbed and Valley and other urban waterways in the City, such as Chollas Creek and Nestor Creek, need to be sanitized with the same vigor.

With an estimated 20% of San Diego's homeless population residing along the San Diego River, we are asking for your immediate support to include the San Diego Riverbed and Valley into the ongoing Hepatitis A cleanup and for it to become a multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency effort. As part of a coordinated response to address this public health emergency, staff should be directed to breakdown illegal encampments and relocate inhabitants to appropriate shelters where they can access restrooms and handwashing facilities.

The San Diego Riverbed and Valley is an environmentally sensitive habitat for native animals and plants. It is extremely worrisome that the amount of trash, debris and human feces still exist in this sensitive area. A recent draft study by the City and County (*San Diego Bacteria TMDL Cost-Benefit Analysis – Draft Report*) as well as co-report titled *Surfer Health Study*, observed that the presence of human waste in local waterways is a source of harmful bacteria and viruses that flow into the ocean and found that “targeting human waste sources of bacteria is the most cost-effective strategy to improve public health and increase recreational opportunities following rain events.” Addressing the presence of human feces in the San Diego River Valley should be a top priority.

In addition to the continued spread of Hepatitis A, the potential dangers of ongoing encampments along the San Diego River include contamination due to the presence of human

feces at the mouth of the river, harm to sensitive species and habitat, continued build-up of trash, increased fire risk, increased risk to public safety personnel and volunteers and damage to the Mission Valley Preserve.

We fear that this epidemic will continue to spread through the water to the mouth of the river and into the ocean. We cannot afford to delay taking immediate steps to address the spread of Hepatitis A into the San Diego River Valley. Now is the time to act before this becomes an even more widespread health emergency.

We ask for your collaboration and cooperation in expediting this cleanup operation.

Sincerely,



David Alvarez  
Councilmember  
Chair, Committee on the Environment



Lorie Zapf  
Councilmember  
District 2

**CC:** Representative Scott Peters  
Representative Susan Davis  
Senator Toni Atkins  
Assemblymember Todd Gloria  
Assemblymember Shirley Weber