



# New River Water Quality

October 2019



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Water Desk

IMPERIAL VALLEY PRESS  
MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 1983

# Baja carcinogens said dumped into I.V.'s New River

By Neal Templin

along the New River

# New River is declared health hazard

## Dead cats, Toads and Typhoid

Clean-up in the New River, a natural irritant

## Environment

rying its poisonous flotsam into California's bountiful Imperial Valley, past lettuce and cotton fields, and finally emptying into the Salton Sea, a popular fishing and swimming site near Palm Springs. Fishermen and residents alike have complained about pollu-

TIME MAGAZINE  
APRIL 20, 1987

690.74

# 60

# MINUTES

## "THE DIRTIEST RIVER"

- December 1986 (S19E02)



### A Foul River, a Helpless Imperial Valley

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Air pollution is a significant problem; the salinity of the river was reduced as well.

IT'S NOT A PRETTY SIGHT, THIS NEW RIVER, BAJA'S 'AGUA NEGRA'



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NOV 12 1982

Imperial Valley Press  
Sept 13, 1990

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By P. A. Rice

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# Desert Sun

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

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- December 2018



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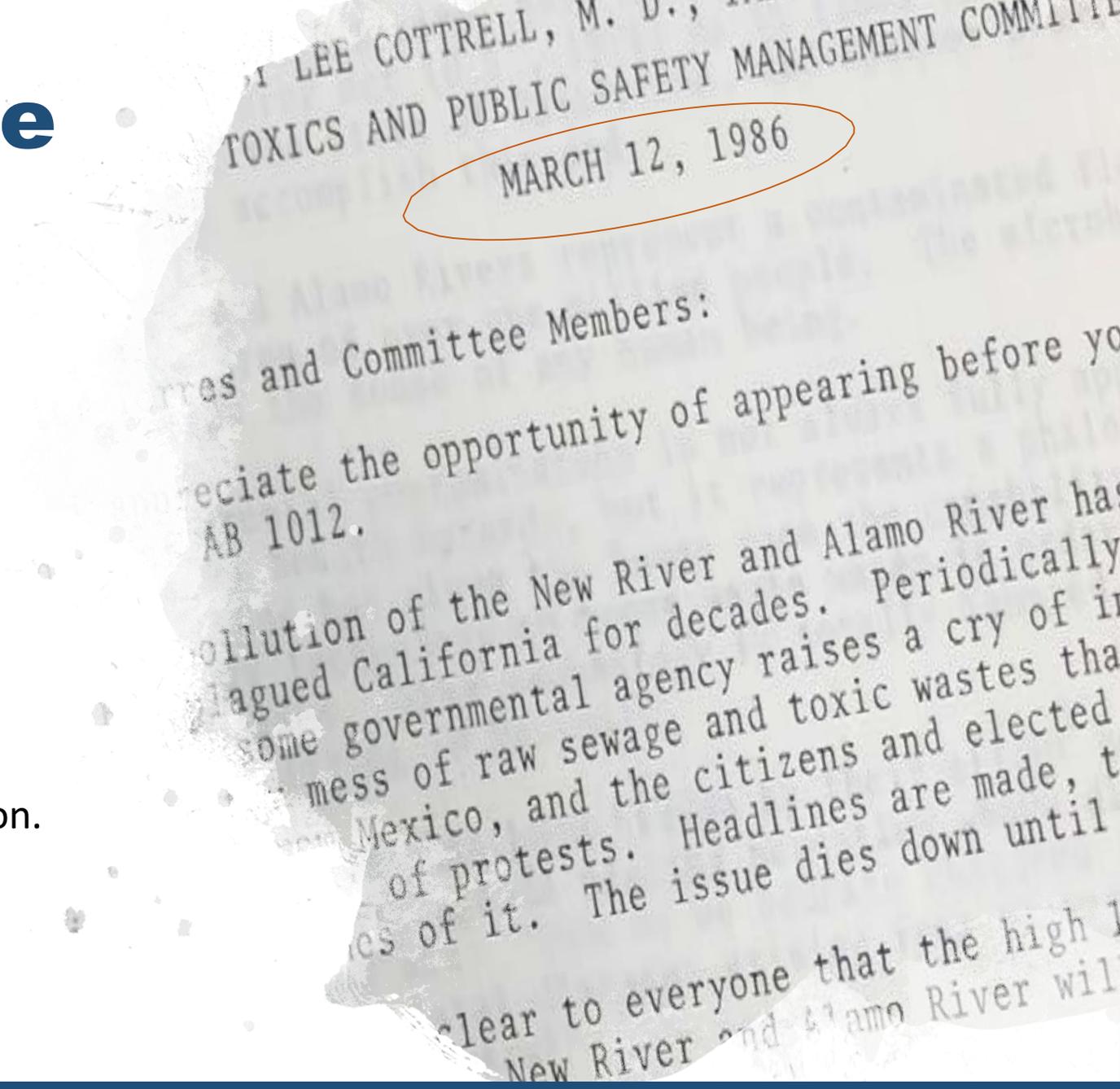
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NOV 12 1982

# Dr. Cottrell's Cycle of Inaction

- 
1. Plague of pollution
  2. Cry of indignation by some
  3. Governmental agency/press over sewage and waste
  4. Citizens and elected officials join in protest
  5. Headlines and talks result in no action.
  6. Issue dies down until raised again.

**REPEAT**





**50 Years of Inaction**



**Here we are again 75 years later**

# Binational Treatment Projects

## Pre-Binational Project (before 2007)

- Up to 20 mgd of raw sewage
- Over 1,000,000 MPN/100 ml (fecal, E. Coli)
- Less than 1.0 mg/l of dissolved oxygen available
- 40% of nutrient (PO<sub>4</sub>) load to Salton Sea

## Post-Binational Projects (shortly after 2007)

- Reduced untreated sewage
- 8,000 – 60,000 MPN/100 ml (fecal, E. Coli)
- Average between 3-5 mg/l of dissolved oxygen available
- 20% of nutrient (PO<sub>4</sub>) load to Salton Sea

# Mexicali Waste Water Treatment is Failing

- Since November 2016, there has been an average of one bypass of raw sewage per month with bypasses ranging in magnitude from 1-13 million gallons per day.
- Failing sewer infrastructure is causing an increase of pathogens in New River and an increase in nutrients into Salton Sea.
- Pumping plants, lift stations, and sewage collection systems are deteriorating with an estimated price tag of \$75-\$80 million to fix the infrastructure problems.



A wide-angle landscape photograph of the Salton Sea. The foreground shows a light-colored, pebbly beach with several pieces of weathered driftwood. The middle ground is dominated by the Salton Sea, which has a dark, brownish-green hue. In the background, a long, low mountain range stretches across the horizon under a clear, bright blue sky.

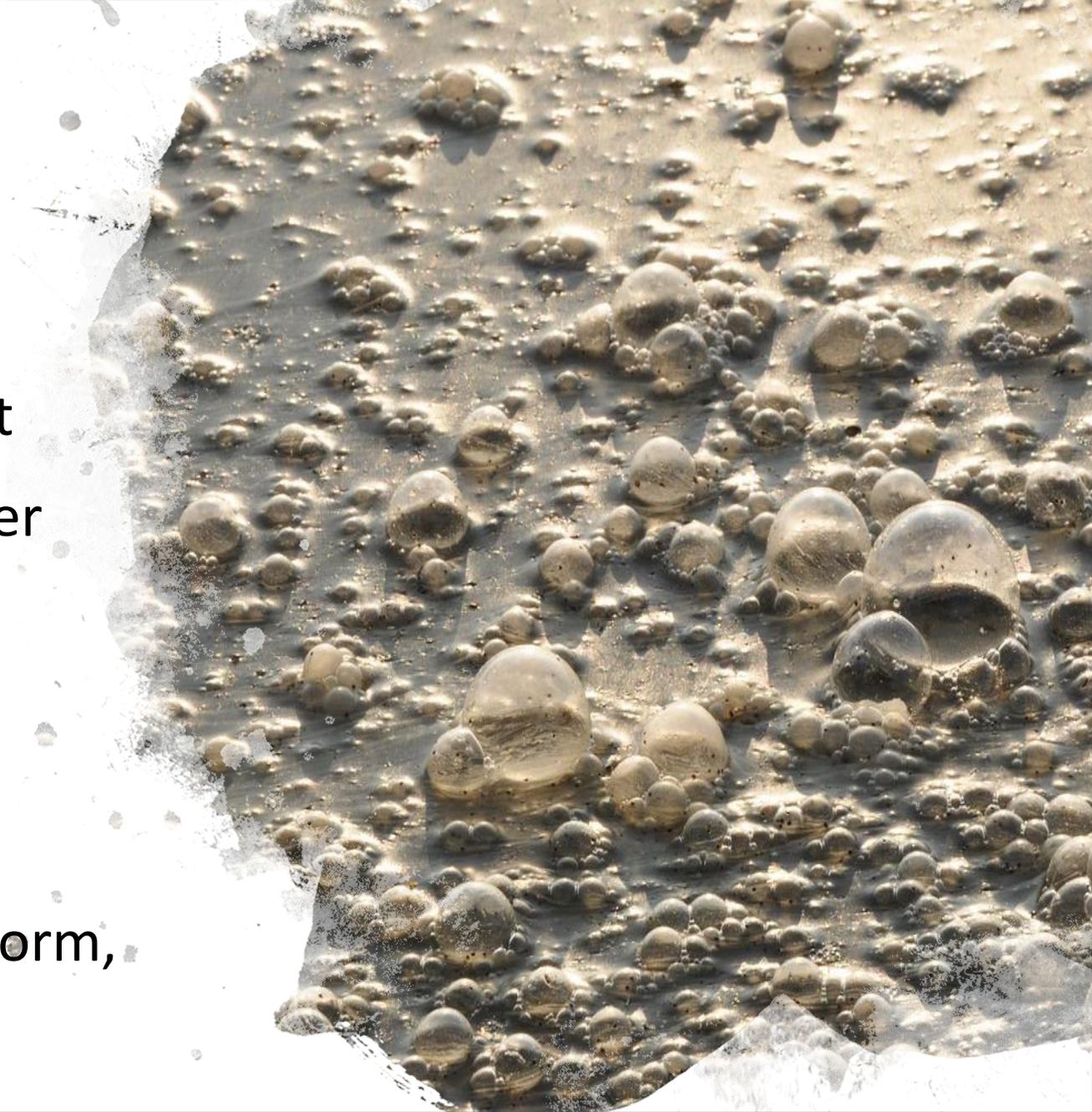
# Salton Sea



Action Now!

# Immediate Actions to Turn the Tide

- New Minute Order Reflecting Compliance with the Clean Water Act
- Restructured and Expanded New River Water Quality Monitoring
- Operational Sewage Treatment Infrastructure in Imperial County
- Communication Protocol to Alert, Inform, and Motivate Community Action





# **Water Quality Standards**

# Bacteria Standards

<b>Minute 264 (County of Imperial) Monthly Average</b>	<b>Minute 270 (San Diego County) Monthly Average</b>	<b>Title 17 (California Code of Regulations)</b>
30,000 fecal colonies No single sample to exceed 60,000 colonies per 100 milliliters (ml)	1,000 total coliform per 100 milliliter (ml)	1,000 total coliform per 100 milliliter (ml)

**30x Higher Bacteria levels allowed in Imperial County**

# Community Parks and Recreational Areas





## **DUTY TO ACT**

**New Minute Order reflecting compliance with the Clean Water Act as adopted in California regulations with actions and sanctions for non-compliance.**





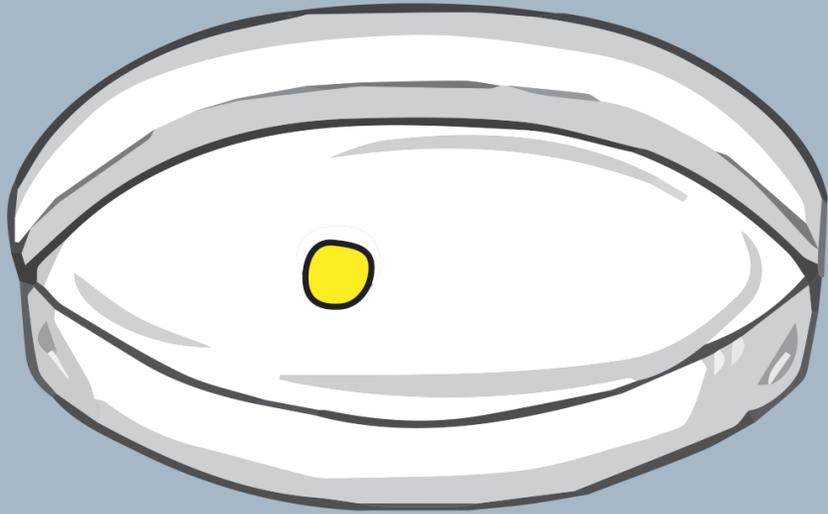
# Water Monitoring

## IBWC Testing of New River

Month	pH	DO (mg/l)	Total Coliform (CFU/100 ML)
1-8-19	No Data – “Government Shutdown/Furlough		
1-22-19	No Data – “Government Shutdown/Furlough		
2-6-19	7.36	6.82	15,000
2-20-19	7.53	7.71	7,000
3-6-19	7.63	5.12	5,000
3-27-19	No Data – “Unexpected issues in field, unable to sample”		
4-10-19	6.61	4.57	22,000
4-24-19	7.32	5.29	6,000
5-8-19	7.75	5.57	55,000
5-22-19	7.32	7.65	6,000
6-5-19	7.38	5.15	19,000
6-19-19	No Data – “Due to staff shortage”		
7-10-19	7.41	3.05	24,000
7-17-19	7.37	2.74	4,000
8-7-19	7.38	1.54	790,000
8-21-19	7.42	2.96	13,000

## RWQCB Testing of New River

Month	pH	DO (mg/l)	Total Coliform (MPN/100 ML)
October 2018	No Data		
November 2018	No Data		
12-12-18	7.59	5.5	70,000
1-29-19	7.69	6.83	30,000
February	No Data		
3-6-19	7.7	4.87	23,000
3-27-19	7.7	4.38	29,000
4-23-19	7.7	4.91	160,000
5-29-19	7.7	4.38	9,500
June	No Data		
7-2-19	8.1	3.5	No Data
8-28-19	7.7	2.4	No Data
9-24-19	7.7	2.8	No Data



**CFU**



**MPN**

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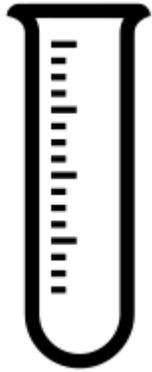
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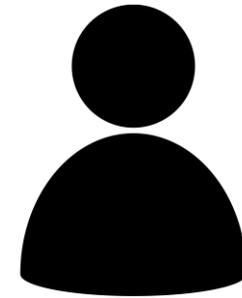
# Implementation of Imperial County Water Testing Program



**Water Testing**



**Consistent**



**Responsive**



## DUTY TO ACT

A standardized testing protocol, better adherence to that protocol, and financing to support the County of Imperial water testing program estimated at \$150,000/year.





# **Water Treatment Facility**

# Operational Water Treatment in Imperial County

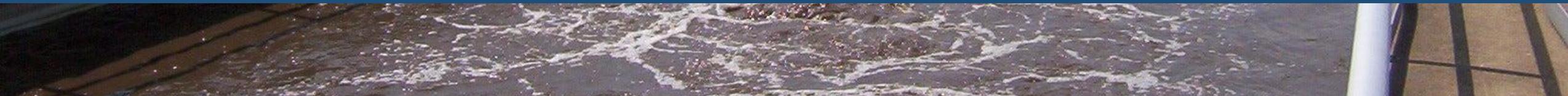
- Treat 100% effluent from New River
- Remove 100% solid waste from River
- Fast-track permitting and construction





## **DUTY TO ACT**

A wastewater treatment facility in Imperial County.





# Communication

# Communication Gaps, Fails, and Inconsistencies

- Calxico reroute of New River and deletion of waste water treatment plant.
- Announced and unannounced sewage discharges.
- New River water monitoring results are not user friendly.



# Communication Protocol Components

- Infrastructure Project Updates
- Sewage discharge notification protocol
- Accessible water quality testing results
- Unified signage protocols

**WARNING**

**CONTAMINATED SOIL AND  
NEW RIVER WATER**



**KEEP OUT!!**

**¡PELIGRO!**



**TIERRA Y AGUA DEL RIO  
NUEVO CONTAMINADA**

**¡PROHIBIDO ENTRAR!**

PAID FOR BY CALEXICO NEW RIVER COMMITTEE

**Desert Sun.**  
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



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