



Local Union 569 San Diego

(3/18/15) Public Workshop
Salton Sea
Deadline: 3/11/15 by 12:00 noon



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

4545 Viewridge Avenue, Suite 100 San Diego, CA 92123-5615 (858) 569-8900

March 6, 2015

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov



Subject: Comment Letter: Salton Sea

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Board:

On behalf of over 3,100 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 569 representing San Diego and Imperial Counties, I am writing to express our support for the Imperial Irrigation District's request to convene stakeholders to find a definitive, funded solution to prevent the impending public health, economic and environmental crisis of a shrinking Salton Sea.

Imperial County is a working class community where many families struggle to make ends meet. The region also suffers from some of the worst air quality in the state. These challenges could get significantly worse if the Salton Sea is left unaddressed. Mitigation water currently delivered to the Sea under the Quantification Settlement Agreement will stop in 2017. As water levels decrease and the Sea shrinks, shoreline will be exposed and dangerous particles can become airborne. This dust will worsen Imperial County's already-poor air quality and cause harmful health impacts to residents in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys and potentially, neighboring communities in Southern California. Risk of heart disease, asthma, lung cancer, and other health problems will increase.

When people suffer, the economy suffers and the ripple effect of this public health crisis will be felt throughout the state. In fact, the Pacific Institute's study, *Hazard's Toll: The Costs of Inaction at the Salton Sea* estimates the total costs could run into the tens of billions.

Additionally, the Salton Sea is one of our state's most significant environmental resources, supporting more than 400 species and serving as a critical link on the Pacific Flyway. The region also has the potential to become California's hub of renewable energy with thousands of megawatts of undeveloped solar, wind, and geothermal resources that could result in thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs.

This crisis needs leadership and more importantly, solutions. We call upon the Board to use its power to bring all necessary parties together and convene a collaborative process to identify a specific restoration plan that can be implemented and funded in time to avert this looming disaster threatening our region and the entire State.

Sincerely,

Johnny Simpson
Business Manager

cc: Stephen W. Benson, Board President, Imperial Irrigation District
Ryan E. Kelley, Chairman of the Board, County of Imperial

JS:dkm
opeiu #537, afl-cio, clc