



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2022

Mayor Gloria Makes Largest Investment in Decades to Improve the City’s Aging Storm Drain System

CITY SECURED EPA LOAN THAT PAVES THE WAY FOR UP TO \$733 MILLION OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS TO FIX FAILING PIPES AND PUMP STATIONS, BUILD GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

SAN DIEGO – To address the City of San Diego’s aging storm drain system and protect neighborhood quality of life, Mayor Todd Gloria joined U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leaders Tuesday to formally sign off on a key federal loan that will allow for up to \$733 million to be invested in stormwater infrastructure projects over the next five years.

The City Council unanimously approved the plan in April, allowing the City to use the EPA’s special loan program for water infrastructure projects to cover 49% of up to \$733 million in stormwater upgrades – from pipeline replacements to pump station repairs to watershed restoration. The City will cover the other half through loans, grants and other financing methods.

Mayor Gloria and EPA officials held a signing ceremony at the top of the Torrey Pines State Reserve with the expansive Los Peñasquitos [Watershed](#) in the background. One of the over 80 projects funded will be the restoration of 84 acres of historic salt marsh habitat in the watershed.

Mayor Gloria’s signature will kick off the first funding installment of \$225 million.

“Our storm drain system is largely underground and out of sight, but the implications of this aging infrastructure failing are massive – from serious flooding in our neighborhoods to pollution of our bays and the ocean,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. “While replacing storm drains and upgrading pump stations doesn’t capture the public’s attention like fixing potholes, these major investments in critical infrastructure are incredibly important to our neighborhoods and quality of life.”

Established in 2014, the EPA’s Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) is a federal credit program designed to promote improved water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. In January 2021, the EPA selected the City of San Diego’s Stormwater Capital Improvement Program as one of 60 in the nation eligible to apply for the loan and its benefits.

“These innovative projects harness the power of green technology to protect public health and the environment,” said EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water Bruno Pigott. “By investing in its water infrastructure, EPA is helping San Diego protect its communities from potential flooding and prevent runoff of untreated stormwater into local waterways.”

In all, the City plans to utilize the WIFIA program to fund approximately 80 stormwater projects that satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other federal contracting requirements. The spending plan for the full \$733 million includes:

- \$552 million to replace aging metal pipes with reinforced concrete pipes that last for 100 years
- \$91 million for revitalization and restoration of watersheds to improve water quality
- \$36 million for green infrastructure projects to remove pollution and support greening of urbanized communities
- \$30 million to upgrade pump stations that are critical to preventing neighborhood flooding
- \$24 million for the rehabilitation and replacement of deteriorating stormwater infrastructure

“Much of the stormwater infrastructure across the city is past its useful life and needs to be replaced or upgraded to reduce the risk of neighborhood flooding and keep pollution out of our waterways,” said Interim Stormwater Director Bethany Bezak. “This investment is big down payment that will help us build a modern stormwater system and fix pipes before they break and need costly emergency repairs.”

###