The City of SAN DIEGO
Mayor Todd Gloria

News Release

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City of San Diego Prepares Beaches and Bay Shoreline for Winter Storms

CREWS WORKING TO INSTALL BEACH BERMS AHEAD OF FORECASTED EL NIÑO WEATHER SYSTEM

SAN DIEGO – With a strong El Niño weather system in the forecast this fall and winter, the City of San Diego's beach mechanized team is installing sand berms on City beaches and the Mission Bay shoreline. Crews use large equipment to move and shape sand into berms, which are intended to protect against flooding caused by high tides and surf.

Berm installation is anticipated to take several weeks, starting on the bay and then moving along the beach shoreline to be completed by early November. The City installs the berms annually ahead of the winter storm season, and with a predicted El Niño system this year, emergency officials are urging extra precautions.

"These berms help absorb and dissipate the energy of waves and high tides, providing an added layer of protection," said Assistant Fire Chief Rob Rezende, who oversees the City's Office of Emergency Services. **"By breaking the force of the incoming waves, they reduce the risk of erosion and coastal damage. With the potential for a wetter winter and stronger storms associated with El Niño, we're taking steps now to prepare our beaches and shoreline before severe weather arrives."**

The berm installation is one part of the City's broader preparations for the rainy season. While flooding in coastal areas can occur during winter storms, particularly when combined with high tides, anticipated El Niño conditions could increase that risk and affect locations that do not typically experience flooding.

To spread awareness, the City launched an El Niño in San Diego educational campaign to encourage residents to prepare for extreme weather conditions. Residents are encouraged to make a family emergency plan, sign up for alerts, build an emergency kit and take steps now to prepare their homes and property for flooding, including using sandbags and other methods to protect structures from wet weather.

Last week, the City's Stormwater Department sent informational brochures to about 7,000 households and businesses located in high-risk flood zones. But because flooding can occur outside designated flood zones, all property owners and renters are encouraged to consider flood insurance. San Diego residents

qualify for a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums through FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.

While encouraging residents to prepare, the City is also taking steps to reduce flood risk and strengthen its stormwater system ahead of the rainy season. Over the past fiscal year, Stormwater crews maintained more than 11 miles of channels, prioritizing areas impacted by the 2024 floods and other locations known to experience flooding during heavy rains. The City plans to expand that work to more than 20 miles of channels in FY27.

Crews have also inspected more than 30,000 storm drain inlets, increased cleaning in areas that historically accumulate debris and completed preventive maintenance at all 15 stormwater pump stations to ensure they are fully operational. Teams have also replaced deteriorated storm drain segments as part of the City's ongoing work to prepare the system for heavy rainfall.

To find out if your home is in a floodplain, go to sandiego.gov/floodplain. For more information and resources on how to properly prepare before a storm, please visit the City's El Niño readiness website at sandiego.gov/elnino.



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