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Audit Committee Recommends Changes to City’s Industrial Wastewater Control Program

SAN DIEGO – Today, the City of San Diego’s Audit Committee approved recommendations by the City Auditor for the City’s Industrial Wastewater Control Program.

The Public Utilities Department’s (PUD) Industrial Wastewater Control Program (IWCP) represents a key element of the City of San Diego’s environmental management efforts. IWCP permits, monitors, and inspects a variety of industries across the City and twelve other participating agencies to detect and minimize the discharge of toxic substances into the metropolitan sewerage system. IWCP is essential for securing a secondary treatment waiver from the federal government, which helps the City avoid approximately \$2 billion in upgrade costs to the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant. IWCP also plays an increasingly significant role as the Pure Water Program is implemented.

The overall objectives of this audit were to determine (1) whether IWCP maintains a complete and accurate inventory of industrial users within the Metropolitan Wastewater Area; and (2) whether and to what extent IWCP has inspected and issued a permit to regulated industrial users. The City Auditor made two findings and seven recommendations to help the IWCP better understand its service demands, improve oversight of critical program outputs, and plan its future capacities. Among them include:

- Updating the program’s policies, procedures, and methods for identifying potential industrial users within the Metropolitan Wastewater Area;
- Working with the Economic Development Department to update the City’s Open Counter portal by adding IWCP permits to the list of potential permits that a business may need to acquire from the City when starting or expanding operations;
- Developing procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of methods for identifying new businesses, conducting inspections, and issuing permits;

- Establishing target service levels for inspections and permit issuances for both federally- and locally-regulated industrial permittees; and
- Completing a staffing analysis to determine resources necessary to meet target service levels.

These changes can help the program improve effectiveness in protecting the City's environmental quality and wastewater infrastructure.

“I have been deeply concerned with the state of the City’s Industrial Wastewater Control Program, including the fact that big businesses were not paying enough and everyday ratepayers were making up the difference because the City had not bothered to update its fees,” said Audit Chair Moreno. “The key to success in improving how this program is run is to implement the new target levels, but also be vigilant in monitoring them and being transparent in reporting out how we are doing, so that the Council and public can be aware of any issues we may have in achieving them.”

This performance audit will next be presented at Environment Committee prior to going to Council as an informational item. More information on the performance audit can be found [here](#).

Councilmember Vivian Moreno represents the Eighth Council District of the City of San Diego, which includes the communities of Barrio Logan, Egger Highlands, Grant Hill, Logan Heights, Memorial, Nestor, Ocean View Hills, Otay Mesa, San Ysidro, Shelltown, Sherman Heights, Stockton and the Tijuana River Valley.