



San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2012

Contact: Jonathan Heller, Communications Director: jheller@sandiego.gov, (619) 533-4782

JUDGE ALLOWS TIJUANA VALLEY DREDGING TO MOVE FORWARD *Decision Will Protect Lives and Property by Averting Potential Flooding*

San Diego, CA: A Superior Court Judge this morning approved an agreement between the City of San Diego and a public-interest group that will allow the City to move forward with plans to dredge the Tijuana River Valley, just in time for the rainy season.

The decision by Judge Timothy Taylor will alleviate a significant flooding threat in the Tijuana River Valley that caused major anxiety for City officials and Tijuana River Valley residents.

The City's earlier attempts to dredge the valley were stymied by San Diegans for Open Government (SDOG), which on several occasions challenged environmental permits issued by the City that would have allowed for the clearing of the Tijuana River Pilot Channel and Smuggler's Gulch of debris. Taylor issued an injunction in May 2012 that halted dredging plans and required the City to perform additional environmental review.

Earlier this month, the City Council rejected an offer by SDOG's attorney to allow dredging to move forward under certain conditions, one of them being that the City pay him more than \$300,000 in attorney's fees.

At a court hearing this morning, the two sides reached an agreement that allows the City to perform dredging work until mid-February 2013 and postpones until December 2012 the question of attorney's fees, which will be left to the Court to decide.

"I'm glad the two sides were able to work together to forge an agreement that will help protect residents' lives and livelihoods," said San Diego City Attorney Jan Goldsmith, who praised the work of Deputy City Attorney Andrea Contreras, who represented the City in the matter.

Goldsmith also voiced appreciation that SDOG attorney Cory Briggs and his client, Ian Trowbridge, "came together with the City to hammer out the agreement and extend a helping hand to the residents."

The agreement was met with applause from about a dozen Tijuana River Valley residents who attended today's hearing.

"It's great news that the litigants have taken a step back and allowed this to go through," said Carolyn Powers, a longtime civic activist in the valley. "Dredging is vitally important to the safety of that area."

#