



# 2023 Federal Priorities

**Hundreds of millions of Americans participate in ocean and Great Lakes recreation each year, supporting millions of jobs and generating over \$150 billion annually. Yet, our nation's coastlines, which these industries depend upon, are increasingly under siege from the impacts of pollution, development, and climate change. Federal leadership is needed to ensure clean water, resilient coasts, and a healthy ocean to support this public use and economic activity.**

## PROTECT CLEAN WATER & PUBLIC HEALTH

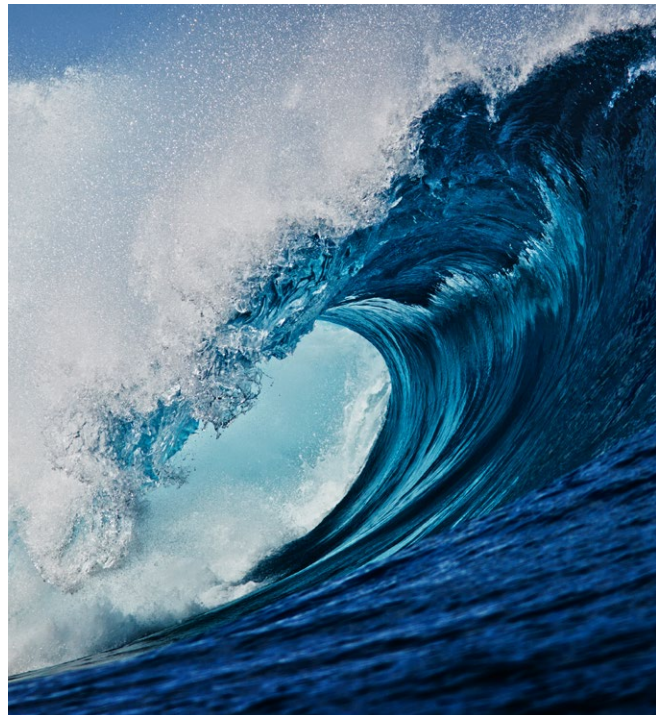
Sewage spills and stormwater runoff threaten the health of beachgoers and coastal ecosystems. Sufficient water quality monitoring is needed to protect public health and inform solutions, while significant investments are needed to repair, upgrade and ensure climate resilience for our failing water infrastructure.

**Support:** FY24 EPA funding appropriations of \$15 million for BEACH Act Grants Program and the full authorized level of \$3 billion for Clean Water State Revolving Fund

## PREVENT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Each year 11 million metric tons of wasteful plastic pollution enters the ocean, posing a major threat to our ocean environment, coastal economy and the food chain. Yet plastics cause pollution throughout their entire lifecycle, from extraction, production, use and disposal, placing frontline communities at risk. Surfrider supports laws aimed at reducing sources of plastic pollution, as well as prevention and response to ocean trash.

**Support:** Legislation that bans easily littered single-use plastics and establishes protections for frontline communities near plastic production facilities



## SUPPORT NATURE-BASED AND OCEAN CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Our nation's infrastructure, coastal communities and marine ecosystems are increasingly threatened by sea level rise, extreme weather events, warming waters and acidification. Federal leadership is needed to implement climate solutions that prohibit new offshore drilling, protect coastal and marine habitats, and advance coastal adaptation.

**Support:** Nature-based and ocean climate solutions legislation that advances proactive adaptation, prohibits new offshore drilling, enhances coastal resilience and funds essential NOAA programs

### About The Surfrider Foundation:

The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves and beaches for all people. Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers, Surfrider's network includes over 200 volunteer chapters and student clubs, and over a million members and supporters.

**For more information, visit [go.surfrider.org/coastalhillday](https://go.surfrider.org/coastalhillday) and [surfrider.org](https://surfrider.org)**

# Protect Our Ocean, Waterways and Communities from Plastic

The health of our ocean and waterways affects all Americans. We depend on our ocean and Great Lakes for recreation, food, ecosystem services, drinking water, and millions of jobs. Unfortunately, plastic pollution is pervasive, damaging human health, habitats, wildlife and economies on our coasts. To address these impacts, the Surfrider Foundation supports legislation that reduces single-use plastics, promotes refill and reuse systems, and better protects communities against the harm of plastics.

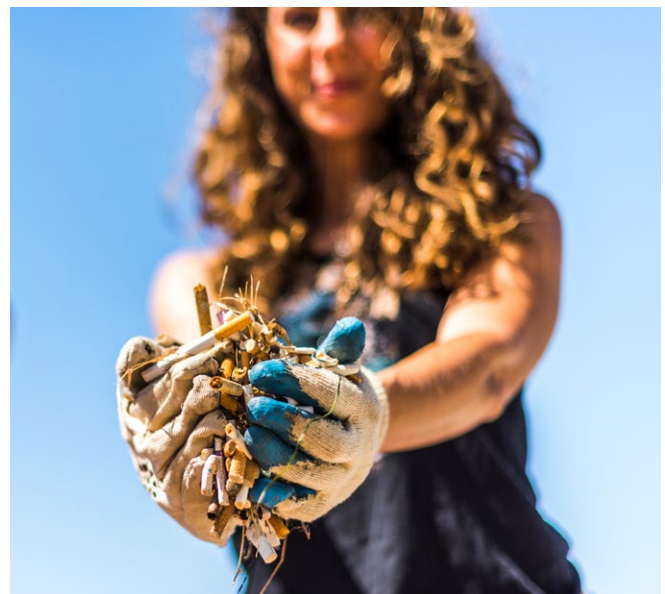
## PROBLEM

**Plastic waste in the United States is increasing and shows up in our air, water and the food web.** It is present in nearly all living creatures, including in human blood, lungs, breast milk and placentas. More than 75 million tons of plastic pollutes our ocean, costing the world economy trillions of dollars every year, affecting habitat health, tourism, fisheries and other marine life. The U.S. produces more plastic waste than any other country in the world, with only ~6% being recycled.

**Plastic production compounds our reliance on and emission of harmful fossil fuels.** Plastics and other petrochemicals are expected to become the largest driver of oil demand by 2050. Pollution from plastic production causes asthma, cancers, endocrine disruption, developmental disorders and heart disease.

**Plastic burning results in significant health and safety risks for workers and surrounding communities.**

Nonetheless, it is being pitched by the plastics and fossil fuel industries as a solution.



## SOLUTION

We must eliminate needless single-use plastics, promote refill and reuse systems, and cease promoting plastic recycling as justification for increasing plastic production.

**Support:** Banning easily littered and pervasive single-use plastics.

**Support:** Establishing stronger protections for frontline communities near plastic production facilities.

**Support:** Creating nationwide targets for plastic source reduction and reuse.

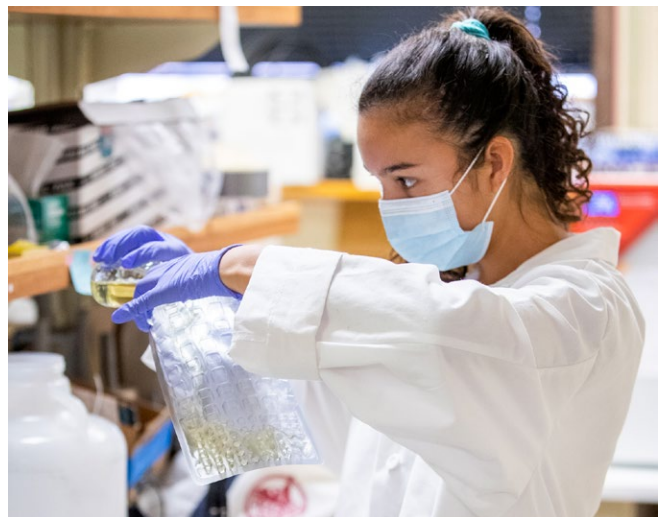
**Support:** Preventing harmful pyrolysis and gasification facilities.

# Fund Critical EPA Programs to Protect U.S. Beaches from Sewage Pollution

Hundreds of millions of Americans and visitors enjoy U.S. beaches every year, trusting that the water is safe for recreation. Unfortunately, too often this is not the case. Investing in EPA programs will help protect ocean water quality, provide families with the information they need to stay safe at the beach, and safeguard our valuable coastal tourism-based economies.

## PROBLEM

Sewage and stormwater runoff threaten the health of beachgoers and coastal ecosystems. Sewage spills and failing wastewater infrastructure discharge raw and under-treated sewage into local waterways and the ocean. Sewage contains bacteria, viruses and parasites that make people sick with gastrointestinal symptoms, rashes, and worse. Nitrogen pollution from sewage discharges also fuel harmful algal blooms that harm human health, cause fish kills and other animal die-offs, and smother coral reefs. This pollution threatens our \$150 billion annual coastal tourism and recreation economies and 2.5 million jobs nationwide.



## SOLUTION

Sufficient water quality monitoring is needed to protect public health and inform solutions, while investments are needed to repair, upgrade and ensure climate resilience for America's failing water infrastructure.

**Support:** Appropriations of \$15 million for the EPA BEACH Act Grants program to fund beach water quality monitoring and public notification programs in coastal states and territories.

**Support:** Appropriations of \$3 billion for the EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund to upgrade failing wastewater infrastructure and stop sewage spills at the source.

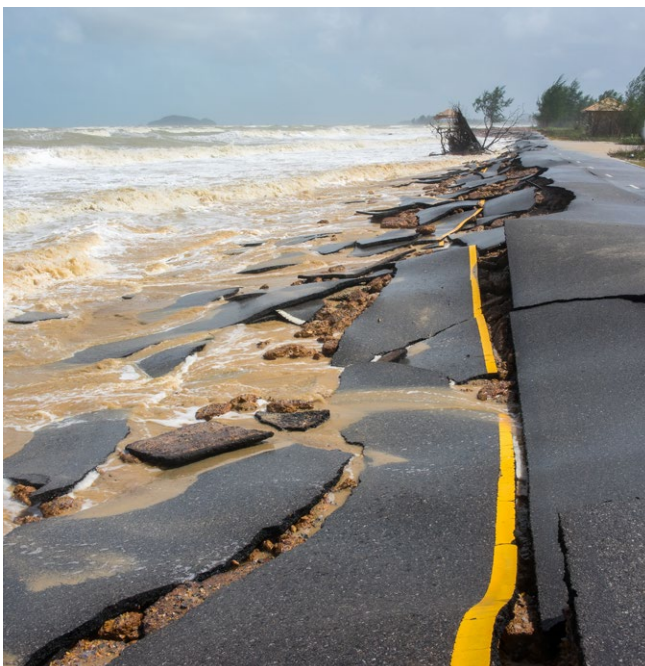
**Support:** Appropriations of \$100 million for the EPA Border Water Infrastructure Grant Program to address the sewage pollution crisis at the US-Mexico border.

# Support Nature-Based and Ocean Climate Solutions

**Coastlines across the U.S. support healthy habitats and wildlife, host incredible outdoor recreation opportunities, provide essential ecosystem services and act as enormous economic drivers, bringing billions of dollars into the U.S. economy. Unfortunately, our ocean and coasts are at risk. This is why the Surfrider Foundation supports legislation that advances nature-based and ocean climate solutions.**

## PROBLEM

Climate change is impacting our waterways, coasts, and ocean as well as the communities that live near and depend on these resources. Extreme weather events, sea level rise, and ocean acidification are disrupting infrastructure, recreation, fisheries, and ecosystem health. Having absorbed nearly 30 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from burning fossil fuels and 90 percent of excess heat trapped in the atmosphere, the ocean is both at the mercy of climate change and an important tool in mitigating its impacts. Yet the ocean can only handle so much. Without meaningful climate action, impacts will only become more destructive and costly.



## SOLUTION

Surfrider calls upon Congress to act now on climate crisis solutions and protect the cornerstone of our planet, the ocean.

**Support:** Nature-based and ocean climate legislation that leverages the potential of our ocean and coast to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Key elements include the following provisions from last session's *Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act*:

- **Enhance Coastal Resilience:** Help coastal communities prepare for and respond to climate change impacts by investing in adaptation, resiliency planning, coastal restoration, and natural infrastructure programs at the local and federal level.
- **End New Offshore Drilling:** Prohibit new offshore oil and gas development (S. 22/ H.R. 470) and oppose new leases in the 5-year plan. Support the transition to responsibly developed renewable energy.
- **Advance Climate Justice:** Ensure climate change planning is inclusive, just, equitable, respects diversity and includes working with communities to transition away from fossil fuels.
- **Protect Critical Habitat and Blue Carbon:** Protect and restore coastal and marine ecosystems, especially blue carbon ecosystems like mangroves, salt marsh and seagrass, which absorb up to four times more carbon than forests on land.

# Protect Clean Water at the U.S./Mexico Border

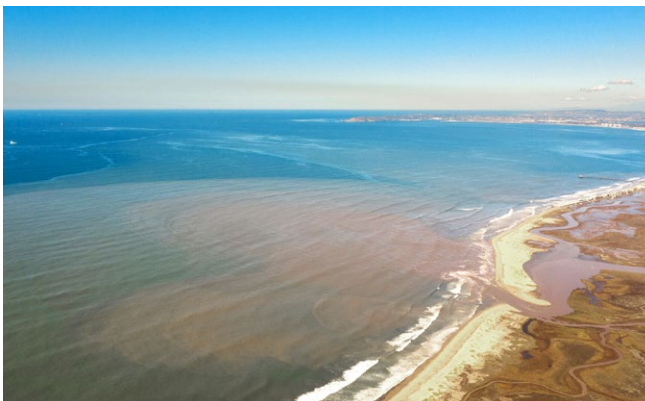
The Pacific coastline along the U.S./Mexico border is steeped in rich multi-cultural identities, layered with immense biodiversity, and contributes high economic value to both countries. Yet, this region is plagued by severe pollution that threatens public health, wildlife, local economies and national security.

## PROBLEM

Every year, billions of gallons of polluted stormwater and wastewater from Mexico bring raw sewage, harmful chemicals and huge amounts of trash to beaches across south San Diego County and northern Baja California. These flows make beaches unsafe for public use, impair habitat and open space, and lead to multiple illnesses. Border-area U.S. beaches were closed every single day in 2022, and have already experienced a year's worth of polluted flows in less than one month in 2023.

This is a serious environmental justice issue that disproportionately affects low income Latinx communities on both sides of the border. Additionally, U.S. Border Patrol agents and Navy sailors are at risk when conducting patrols and training in this contaminated environment.

The USMCA International Trade Agreement provided \$300 million to fund comprehensive solutions to this border pollution; however, roughly \$350 million more is needed to fund the Comprehensive Infrastructure Solution project which is expected to decrease toxic cross-border flows by 75% year-round and reduce beach closures by 95% in summer months.



In the first 25 days of January 2023, border pollution flows exacerbated by extreme rain events exceeded the total amount released in 2022.

**12.38 billion**

Gallons of Toxic Flows in 2022

**12.5 billion**

Gallons of Toxic Flows in January 2023

In 2022, 12.38 billion gallons of transboundary toxic flows lead to record beach closures.

**166**

Imperial Beach

**365**

Tijuana Slough

● Days Closed in 2022

## SOLUTION

Surfrider calls upon Congress to support federal funding to implement stormwater and wastewater upgrades at the U.S./Mexico Border.

**Support:** Appropriations of \$100 million, the full authorized level, for the EPA Border Water Infrastructure Program.

**Support:** Additional funding avenues that could include:

- A second phase USMCA funding bill
- Multiple agency funding contributions