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House of Representatives

THE IBWC MUST CARRY OUT ITS CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: I thank my colleague for yielding me this time. I want to thank the managers of the bill, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Hyde), for including in the en bloc amendment the so-called Hunter-Cunningham-Davis-Filner amendment, which deals with a rather amazing situation on the Mexico-California border in my district. Three years ago, this House passed by unanimous vote a bill that was authored by then-Congressman Bilbray and myself which set up a process and a plan for solving the sewage problem at the border.

Mr. Chairman, there are 50 million gallons of raw sewage that flow throughout my district every day. Because the Tijuana River flows north, Mexico simply does not have the technical ability to treat its sewage, we get it, and the health of our citizens is threatened. Mr. Bilbray and I, sanctioned by this House, came up with a public-private partnership to solve this issue. Three years ago, we voted unanimously to instruct the International Boundary and Water

Commission to carry out this plan. Three years and nothing has happened. Absolutely nothing has occurred to carry out the wishes of this Congress and to protect the health of the citizens of the United States. That is absolutely incredible. It is absolutely threatening to, really, the authority of the United States Congress.

What we have in the en bloc amendment is a sense of Congress saying to the IBWC, the International Boundary and Water Commission, to get to it, do something. I think they should be held in contempt of Congress myself because the Chair of that commission, in testimony to the United States Congress, to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, said they were going to carry this out. He has not done so. That commission, Mr. Chairman, is in disarray. This Congress should carry out an investigation of that commission, but this is a first step in the sense of Congress resolution. I thank the managers for it.