

## Mayor Denies Betta Pharma Donation Ties to Chemical Dumping Permits

*Environmental groups demand investigation into Alamo Sea contamination*

---

**LOS SANTOS** — Mayor Devon Weston issued a forceful denial Wednesday regarding allegations that his office accepted campaign contributions from Betta Pharmaceuticals in exchange for permits allowing chemical waste disposal in the Alamo Sea.

"These accusations are baseless and politically motivated," Weston said during an impromptu press conference at City Hall. "My administration has always prioritized environmental safety and the wellbeing of San Andreas residents."

The controversy erupted after leaked documents suggested Betta Pharmaceuticals, the state's largest producer of the antidepressant Deludamol, made substantial donations to Weston's re-election campaign in early 2024—just months before receiving approval to expand their "industrial byproduct management" operations near Sandy Shores.

### The Allegations

Environmental advocacy group Clean Waters SA claims the permits allowed Betta to dump an estimated 200,000 gallons of chemical runoff—primarily solvents and precursor compounds used in Deludamol synthesis—directly into tributaries feeding the Alamo Sea.

"The timing is suspicious," said Maria Castellanos, Clean Waters SA director. "The mayor's office fast-tracked these permits with minimal environmental review, despite concerns raised by the State Water Board."

Campaign finance records show Betta Pharmaceuticals contributed \$347,000 to Weston's campaign through various subsidiaries and affiliated PACs between January and March 2024. The chemical disposal permits were approved in May.

### Mayor's Response

Weston characterized the donations as routine corporate support unrelated to any policy decisions.

"Betta Pharmaceuticals is one of the largest employers in Blaine County," Weston stated. "They support many local candidates across party lines. To suggest their lawful campaign contributions constitute corruption is

absurd."

The mayor's office released a statement emphasizing that all permits were reviewed and approved by the Department of Environmental Protection, which deemed the disposal methods "within acceptable environmental parameters."

## **Mounting Concerns**

However, local residents near the Alamo Sea report disturbing changes to the water since the permits took effect.

"The water looks different," said truck driver Marcus Webb, who regularly crosses shallow portions of the Alamo for his delivery route. "Sometimes there's this... film on top. And I've been seeing things. Animals that don't look right."

Webb's account echoes similar reports filed with the Blaine County Sheriff's Department, though officials have attributed such claims to heat exhaustion and dehydration common in the desert region.

The Blaine County Coroner's Office declined to comment on the discovery of three bodies near the Alamo Sea shoreline in the past six weeks, citing ongoing investigations. Sources familiar with the cases say all three victims were found with water in their lungs despite being discovered on dry land.

## **Betta Pharmaceuticals Statement**

In a written statement, Betta Pharmaceuticals spokesperson Jennifer Caldwell said the company "adheres to all federal and state environmental regulations" and called the allegations "misinformation spread by anti-business activists."

"Our chemical management protocols exceed industry standards," Caldwell wrote. "The compounds in question pose no threat to public health when properly diluted, as occurs in natural water systems."

The statement did not address questions about the specific chemicals being disposed of or their potential neurological effects.

## **What's Next?**

State Senator Linda Zhao (D-Los Santos) announced plans to introduce legislation requiring independent environmental reviews for all industrial chemical disposal permits.

"If there's nothing to hide, the administration should welcome scrutiny," Zhao said. "The people of San Andreas deserve to know what's being dumped in our water."

The San Andreas Attorney General's Office confirmed it has received a formal complaint regarding the permits but would not comment on whether an investigation is underway.

Mayor Weston dismissed calls for his resignation, stating he looks forward to "complete vindication" once the facts are examined.

The Alamo Sea, once a recreational destination, has seen sharp declines in tourism since 2024. Local fishing guides report increasingly strange catches, including fish with deformities and aggressive behavior toward humans.

"Nobody wants to go out there anymore," said charter captain Roy Delgado. "The water remembers everything you put in it."

---

*Contributing reporting by Sarah Chen and Marcus Rodriguez. Contact the newsroom at [tips@lsgazette.sa](mailto:tips@lsgazette.sa)*

---

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Betta Pharmaceuticals is a major advertising partner of the Los Santos Gazette. This relationship did not influence our reporting.*