

Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum
c/o IBWC
325 Golf Course Road
Mercedes, TX 78570-9677

September 2, 2010

Mr. Edward Drusina
Commissioner
International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section
4171 N. Mesa, Suite 100-C
El Paso, TX 79902-1441

Dear Commissioner Drusina:

During the recent flood emergency of historic proportions in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Mr. Rodolfo Montero and the local staff and management of the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) acted in an exemplary fashion to protect both American and Mexican lives and property. As a unanimous voice, the Citizens Forum in the Lower Rio Grande Valley would like to commend their tremendous efforts.

Through meticulously calculated water releases from Falcon Dam and careful diversions of water along the river, the IBWC maintained a fine balance to minimize flooding hazards and impacts, both upstream and downstream. Working around the clock in twelve-hour shifts, these dedicated Federal employees monitored water flows, monitored of hundreds of miles of levees, coordinated closely with Mexico and with the state of Texas, closed irrigation and drainage structures along the floodways, supported local municipalities to alleviate subsequent storm water flooding and provide emergency protection, and kept the public informed. Seepage and damage that was discovered was minor and addressed immediately.

Hurricane Alex and Tropical Depression #2 hit as levee restorations were nearing completion. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the restored levees were tested to the extreme and proved effective. The IBWC utilized these funds and managed this restoration efficiently and successfully. The challenges now are to provide for the operation and maintenance of these critical structures, and for previously identified repairs to the dams. We look forward to your support of these key items which are essential to the continued welfare of this growing region.

Twenty-two years have passed since the local IBWC office has been called upon to handle an event of this epic magnitude. To their great credit, physical preparations such as dams, levees, and floodways were in their best condition in years and worked exactly as they were intended. Even more impressive were the Federal employees of the IBWC, whose dedication and commitment ensured the wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of Americans, and the protection of billions of dollars worth of property.

Thank you so much for your continued commitment to the safety of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Sincerely,



William R. Lewis
Co-Chair
Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum