



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
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MEXICO REPORTS NORMAL LEVELS OF HEAVY METALS IN THE SAN PEDRO RIVER IN MEXICO

The Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, has advised that laboratory tests from the San Pedro River in Mexico are within a normal range. Mexican officials took water samples on September 23 following reports of a release of potentially contaminated water into the San Pedro River watershed. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) reported on October 3 that laboratory results from sampling in the San Pedro River in the United States were also normal.

Personnel from the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission and Mexico's National Water Commission (Conagua) made a site visit to the San Pedro River basin in Sonora, Mexico after a detention pond at the Buena Vista Copper Mine in Cananea, Sonora overflowed. The Mexican officials took water quality samples from the detention pond, the river, and two tributaries -- the Barrilito and Riito Arroyos. The Barrilito Arroyo, located near the detention pond, flows into the Riito Arroyo, which flows to the river itself.

Mexican laboratory results detected aluminum, arsenic, barium, cadmium, copper, chromium, iron, manganese, nickel, lead, and zinc in the San Pedro River in Mexico. The Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission described the levels as within the normal range. Various heavy metals were also detected in the detention pond and

tributaries, including some at levels that greatly exceed the amounts detected in the San Pedro River. The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has requested additional information about the testing and analysis performed in Mexico.

Mexican officials took additional samples on October 3 but the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission has not yet received the results from these tests.

The San Pedro River flows north from Mexico, entering the United States to the west of Naco, Arizona. The mine is located approximately 30 miles upstream from the U.S.-Mexico border.

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