

A Message from U.S. Commissioner Drusina

“Excellence Through Teamwork”



The heat is building across much of the United States both environmentally and politically so we must be mindful of how best to protect ourselves. I can assure you that I am continuously looking out for ways we can better serve our country through the work of the International Boundary and Water Commission. Environmentally we have seen temperatures across the border reaching over 110 degrees Fahrenheit and politically we have seen heated exchanges with regard to health care, immigration, taxes and the budget, but through it all we must remain calm, collected and engaged.

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Whether you are at work or at play, always be mindful of the impact weather can have on you. Recently a dust storm in western New Mexico blinded drivers along Interstate 10 causing a 25-vehicle pileup killing six. Reports are that the dust storm suddenly developed, causing a blackout for drivers. Plan your trips carefully, and if you are being challenged by weather, react on the side of caution. Heat is also a killer along our southwest border. From California through Arizona to Texas, reports are coming in of heat-related deaths. All these deaths were preventable, if caution would have been followed. Wear your hats, put on sun screen, drink water and don't drive long distances without carefully checking your vehicle and carrying provisions in case the vehicle breaks down. Look after the young and elderly as they are more susceptible to heat stroke.

As for the heat coming from the political side, get involved with the issues that are important to you, and raise your voice through constructive dialog. Regardless of which side of the aisle you side with, the important thing is to speak up, voice your opinion, and vote. Democracy depends on it.

For those of you interested in where we stand financially with regard to the FY18 budget, we have submitted to the Administration through the Department of State a fair and reasonable proposal for 2018 that keeps us operating close to how we work today. Of course, our proposed budget is subject to U.S. Congress approval, and we are hopeful that they will recognize that we have done our job in submitting only for our essential service, labor, and construction requirements. The challenge we face is the level of support the President's Budget will be given by Congress. We believe we are in a good position, but there is a great deal of uncertainty so all we can do at this point is wait .

So, stay calm, collected, engaged, and enjoy life in general. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

Signing of Minute 321: Official Means of Identification of Vehicles and Other Equipment

The Commission met at the Headquarters office of the Mexican Section in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua on January 19, 2017 to sign Minute No. 321, “Official Means of Identification of Vehicles and other Equipment Crossing the International Boundary on Official Business of the Commission or of either Section.”

The Commissioners noted that the official decal adopted in 1990 (seen at the top of page 1) is similar to decals used by other agencies and, when viewed at a distance, could be confused with them. For this reason, the Commission decided to adopt a more distinctive decal (below at left) for its vehicles and equipment along the border, while continuing to use the 1990 decal for other purposes.



Under current practice, the official decal is most commonly used by itself to identify vehicles and equipment while agency license plates and pennants are rarely used as a supplementary means of identification.

In accordance with the Minute, the Commission has a one-year transition period to deploy the new decals on its vehicles and equipment.

Commission personnel regularly conduct work along the international boundary in automobiles, trucks, heavy equipment, such as front end loaders, and boats on the Rio Grande, Colorado River, and Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs. The new decal will make Commission vehicles more readily identifiable to law enforcement or other entities in the border region.

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The Minute was approved by the two Governments and entered into force on February 3, 2017.



US and Mexican Section Commissioners and Secretaries sign Minute 321.

Signing of Minute 322: Extension of Temporary Emergency Delivery of Colorado River Water for Use in Tijuana

For the first time since 1968, the Commission signed two Minutes in one day. After signing Minute No. 321 in Ciudad Juarez, the Commissioners and Secretaries crossed the border to U.S. Section Headquarters in El Paso, Texas to sign Minute No. 322, “Extension of the Temporary Emergency Delivery of Colorado River Water for Use in Tijuana, Baja California.” Commission tradition is to alternate Minute signings between the two countries. U.S. Section staff who had worked on the Minute were invited to the signing ceremony.

Minute 322 was based on the request by the Baja California State Water Commission (CEA) to extend for an additional five years the emergency delivery to the city of Tijuana, Baja California of a portion of the Colorado River waters allotted to Mexico under the 1944 Water Treaty. In the event of an emergency in Tijuana affecting the city’s water supply, water deliveries could be made via the U.S. conveyance system, with a connection to Mexico at the international boundary at Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay. The deliveries are carried out with the cooperation of the United States Bureau of Reclamation, San Diego County Water Authority, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and Otay Water District, the California agencies that own and operate the affected storage, conveyance, and distribution system. Mexico covers all costs associated with the emergency deliveries.

The connection constructed to enable emergency water deliveries to Mexico at the international land boundary under earlier Minutes was rehabilitated at Mexico's expense so that the emergency deliveries could be reinitiated and continued. The Tijuana utility (CESPT) covered the costs for repair and replacement of valves owned and operated by the Otay Water District required solely for the purposes of effecting water deliveries to Tijuana. The deliveries are subject to any operational constraints that could affect the volumes and time frames.

Under the 1944 Water Treaty, Mexico receives an annual allotment of 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water, with most of this volume delivered in the river where it enters Mexico near Mexicali, Baja California.

Minute No. 322 will remain in force through January 19, 2022.

US and Mexican Section Commissioners and Secretaries sign Minute 322.



Commission Reviews Nogales Infrastructure

U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina and Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon, accompanied by members of their staffs, toured stormwater and wastewater infrastructure in Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora on May 16.

For years, the Commission has been partnering with other U.S. and Mexican agencies to address stormwater infrastructure needs in the region to reduce the risk of flooding in both countries, especially near the border in downtown. The group visited the site of a stormwater retention structure in Mexico, one of a number of such structures that help control the flow of rainwater through the community. Because Nogales, Arizona is downstream from its sister city, stormwater infrastructure constructed in Mexico can benefit both countries.

The group also toured the transboundary stormwater tunnel that crosses beneath the DeConcini Port of Entry to view its condition. Later, they visited the Nogales Wash, the concrete stormwater channel through central Nogales, Arizona. In recent years, big storms have damaged the concrete panels in the Wash, raising concern about potential risk to the international sewer pipeline that runs below the Wash. The U.S. Section is currently completing design documents to rehabilitate the pipeline.

The Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant in Mexico was another stop on the tour. Mexican officials advised they are in the process of expanding the treatment plant.

Following the field trip, the Commission met to discuss the ongoing efforts to improve the region’s infrastructure .



Nogales Infrastructure Review...



Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant (left) and concrete stormwater channel through central Nogales, AZ (right).



Viewing transboundary stormwater tunnel, DeConcini Port of Entry, Nogales, AZ.



Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant (left) and stormwater retention structure in Mexico (right).

Regional Commission Meeting in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico

In February, the International Boundary and Water Commission met at the Mexican Section’s Amistad Dam Field Office in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico to discuss Commission issues related to the area of responsibility from Presidio, Texas-Ojinaga, Chihuahua to Amistad Dam. The day before the meeting, a tour of Rio Grande channel maintenance sites in the Presidio-Ojinaga area was conducted. Meeting topics included Amistad Dam operations, flood control, hydroelectric power, bathymetric surveys of the international reservoirs, Five-Year Safety of Dams inspections, Amistad Dam structural safety, Rio Grande channel obstructions and conveyance capacity, Rio Grande gaging stations, reconstruction of the Presidio-Ojinaga railroad bridge and expansion of the highway bridge, hydraulic studies, border sanitation, and water quality. Following the meeting, Commission personnel toured various sites around Amistad Dam, including the earthen embankment in Mexico, the reservoir area affected by sinkholes, and Carmina and Lourdes Springs.



IBWC Commissioners and Staff at Regional Commission meeting.



IBWC personnel met at the Mexican Section Field Office in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico.

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