



International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

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COMMISSION SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR U.S.-MEXICO COOPERATION ON COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, has reached agreement on a process to promote greater cooperation between the two countries to improve Colorado River management. The agreement, Minute No. 317, “Conceptual Framework for U.S.-Mexico Discussions on Colorado River Cooperative Actions,” was signed in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua on June 17 by U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina and Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon and was subsequently approved by the U.S. and Mexican governments.

The Minute notes the interest of the Commission in exploring opportunities for binational projects that conserve water, minimize the impacts of potential Colorado River shortage conditions, and generate additional volumes of water using new water sources by investing in infrastructure such as desalinization facilities. The agreement also notes interest in the possibility of permitting Mexico to use U.S. infrastructure to store water (there are no Colorado River reservoirs in Mexico).

To develop these opportunities, the Minute formalizes a process for stakeholder participation through various binational groups to explore potential areas of cooperation and to consider projects or initiatives of interest to both countries such as those related to water conservation, new water sources, system operations, and the environment.

“The Commission has an opportunity to promote cooperative actions that will benefit both countries for decades to come. This agreement establishes a mechanism to ensure that this work

will continue so that we can address many challenges in the basin, including the ongoing drought,” said Commissioner Drusina.

Commissioner Salmon stated that signing this Minute represents an historic moment in bilateral relations with respect to water management on the Colorado River, given that it establishes the framework for creating projects that will permit the transition toward sustainability in the basin that will benefit residents of both countries.

The Minute seeks to define mechanisms under which the two countries may share the costs and benefits of projects and to promote sustainable management of water in the Colorado River Basin, which covers portions of seven states in the United States (Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and California) and two in Mexico (Sonora and Baja California). In 2008, the Commission convened representatives from these states, federal agencies, water managers, and nongovernmental organizations to begin discussing joint cooperative actions. Minute 317 expands on and formalizes the process that is underway.

For more information:

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