



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION UNDERTAKES ACTIONS TO ADDRESS SANITATION CONCERNS AT SAN DIEGO-TIJUANA BORDER

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, has reached key milestones in its work to address sanitation concerns affecting the Tijuana River Valley at San Diego, California-Tijuana, Baja California. The actions build on the efforts of the Commission's Binational Work Groups and the recommendations of an investigation report of a transboundary wastewater spill that occurred in February 2017. The Commission has undertaken the following actions:

- Developed a revised and more detailed binational spill notification protocol. The protocol provides for quick communication between the United States and Mexico, and prompt notification to U.S. stakeholders. Mexican authorities have also developed a notification protocol for transboundary spills among Mexican agencies.
- Drafted a Scope of Work for a contractor to develop a diagnostic for the existing binational diversion and pumping system that conveys wastewater in the Tijuana River for treatment, and to develop new alternatives for additional infrastructure in the United States and/or Mexico. The Scope of Work responds to stakeholder requests to consider new infrastructure on the U.S. side of the border to reduce the impact of transboundary wastewater flows. The Scope of Work is scheduled to be finalized by the end of August.
- Drafted a new, more comprehensive plan for water quality monitoring in the Tijuana River Basin. Work is underway to finalize the plan so it can be implemented.
- Prepared operating protocols for Pump Station CILA to ensure more reliable operation of the equipment that helps prevent transboundary wastewater spills in the Tijuana River.
- Reached agreement to install three new flow meters by the end of August 2017 to provide real-time information about conditions in the Tijuana River and diversions from the river.
- Drafted a plan to conduct binational inspections every other month at key sites that are known to contribute to transboundary wastewater flows followed by a binational meeting. More frequent inspections or inspections at additional sites will be conducted as needed.
- Completed a Scope of Work for a trash boom study. The study will consider the possible construction of a structure to capture trash for disposal, thereby preventing it from spreading throughout the Tijuana River Valley.

- Developed specifications for a back-up generator at Pump Station CILA. The Commission is investigating whether a surplus government generator could be acquired to prevent power disruptions that contribute to the spill of contaminated water in the Tijuana River.
- Prepared a Scope of Work for a feasibility study for a sediment basin to be located along the Tijuana River to capture sediment, trash, and illicit discharges.
- Initiated construction of a \$17 million dollar project at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in San Diego, California to improve secondary treatment under peak flow conditions, with the addition of sedimentation tanks and equalization tanks to ensure continued permit compliance for treatment of Mexican sewage at the plant. This is in addition to the \$335 million dollars in capital expenditures by the U.S. government since 1991 to construct the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant and associated infrastructure to treat Mexican sewage to U.S. standards.
- Supported appropriation of \$148 million pesos (about \$8.4 million dollars) from the State of Baja California for emergency repairs to the Tijuana sanitation system and purchase of needed equipment. Using the emergency funds, work is well underway by the Tijuana utility (CESPT) to repair damaged collectors and acquire equipment.
- Agreed to issue regular reports on Mexico's progress in achieving results that will reduce the chances of sewer breaks.
- Arranged for the Commission to facilitate possible donation of a Vactor truck to Mexico. The City of Imperial Beach is looking at acquiring a new truck in six months and will then consider donating the old one to support maintenance of the Tijuana sewer system.

The Binational Work Groups, with participation from various agencies in both countries, were established in accordance with Commission Minute No. 320, "General Framework for Binational Cooperation on Transboundary Issues in the Tijuana River Basin," signed October 5, 2015. The Commission tasked the Work Groups with developing recommendations to address priority issues of water quality, sediment, and solid waste in the Tijuana River Basin.

In addition to responding to the Work Group recommendations, the Commission's actions respond to the recommendations of a binational task force convened by the Commission following a transboundary sewage spill in February 2017. The interagency task force made a series of recommendations to improve response to any future spills.

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