



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

March 11, 2025

Dear Stakeholders:

Here is the latest update regarding our monitoring of Mexico's International Collector project:

- With the ongoing rain, flow in the Tijuana River is high due to stormwater runoff. There is no transboundary flow at Stewart's Drain. All wet-weather flow is being diverted as designed to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) via JB-1.
- Mexico is sending adequate quantities of wastewater into SBIWTP at this time. Flows that are too low can jeopardize the plant's biological treatment system.
- Mexico still is trying to determine the source of a previously unknown line sending unexpected wastewater flows into the International Collector system. The other line that was recently discovered has been plugged. Heavy rains are making the work more difficult.
- A WhatsApp group chat was formed to share information in real-time back and forth across the border. We are requesting Mexico to inform SBIWTP operators when pumps at Mexican pump PB-1 are turned on or off. (When PB-1 pumps are on, flows are sent to the San Antonio de los Buenos wastewater treatment plant near Tijuana; and when pumps are off, the flow will divert to SBIWTP.)
- USIBWC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and contractor Veolia North America have been meeting every evening virtually with Mexican officials since Sunday for daily updates.
- USIBWC and EPA staff plan to visit the International Collector work site on Wednesday morning.
- Mexico is repairing a 126-meter section of water line. They still expect Phase 1 of the rehabilitation project to last an additional two weeks, and Phase 2 to last one week. This means the project should conclude in early April.
- The International Collector project includes a bypass, which USIBWC, EPA, and the U.S. Department of State demanded in order prevent the discharge of approximately 25-30 million gallons per day of wastewater into the Tijuana River. That's why this project is being done in two phases. This should prevent more than half a billion gallons of wastewater from reaching the river by the time the project is finished.

- Rain is expected over the next several days, which may present additional challenges. USIBWC and EPA will continue to monitor the International Collector for any problems that may arise, and we are in close contact with Mexico.

- I just would like to reiterate: The existing International Collector manages average flows of 32 million gallons a day and has had portions of the line fail due to age and disrepair. Given the amount of flow conveyed by this line, any failures would be catastrophic for the region. Getting the new International Collector up and running as soon as possible is a crucial milestone and will bring more resiliency to the sewage infrastructure in Tijuana.

(Our X site is a good place to check for updates: <https://x.com/usibwc>)

Warm regards,

Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, P.E.
Commissioner (U.S. Section)
International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico
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