



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION  
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

**May 13 update: The USIBWC emphasizes that ongoing work on the International Collector is NOT expected to increase wastewater in the Tijuana River. Phase 2 is tentatively set to begin Wednesday 5/14 and we will closely monitor Mexico's progress to make sure sewage stays out of the river. Thanks to intense coordination by EPA, our agency, and Mexico, sewage in the Collector will either go directly to the plant or be directed to San Antonio de los Buenos on the Mexican coast.**

For Immediate Release  
May 9, 2025

**UPDATE: USIBWC, EPA WORK TO KEEP SEWAGE OUT OF TIJUANA RIVER  
DURING FINAL PHASE OF INTERNATIONAL COLLECTOR PROJECT**

The final phase of the International Collector project is scheduled to start on May 13 after intense coordination with Mexico by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to keep millions of gallons of sewage out of the Tijuana River during the work.

For six days, while 120 feet of Tijuana's International Collector sewage pipeline is rehabilitated between Mexican pump station PB-1 and Junction Box 1, leading to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, the priority will be keeping the wastewater out of the river which flows into the United States.

Mobile pumps and hoses will divert about 20 million gallons a day (MGD) of wastewater from PB-1 directly to the plant.

During the same time, PB-1 will send more than 30 MGD from the Collector to the San Antonio de los Buenos treatment plant and the coast south of Tijuana.

Mexico considered discharging millions of gallons of wastewater into the river which now will divert to the plant, thanks to intense negotiations with USIBWC and EPA.

Once completed, the new International Collector will drastically reduce releases that have contributed to transboundary flows. This project is critical to prevent potential catastrophic failures and increase the reliability of Tijuana's wastewater infrastructure.

The United States Government has been an active and involved partner in this endeavor from the beginning, doing everything possible to prevent Mexican sewage from crossing the border. On several occasions, we worked with Mexico to adjust plans to mitigate sewage flow to the Tijuana River.

Mexico began working 24/7 on this complex International Collector replacement project in late February. Original plans were to finish the job in one phase, which would have sent approximately 25-30 MGD of wastewater into the river over the course of several weeks.

Mexico agreed to a bypass solution consisting of two phases at the urging of USIBWC, EPA, and the U.S. Department of State. This is estimated to have kept more than half a billion gallons of wastewater out of the river.

Phase 1 essentially was completed on April 21, and USIBWC and EPA have been working closely with Mexico on plans for the second and final phase since then.

Besides the discharge of sewage into the river, USIBWC raised other concerns over the early plans for Phase 2 because flows to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant would have been stopped or drastically reduced for several days. If the stoppage was extended longer, the plant's biological treatment process could be negatively impacted.

Subsequent discussions resulted in the new plan for Phase 2, which should keep wastewater flowing to the plant.

USIBWC and EPA works directly with Mexico since the project started and have gone on several site inspections.

The USIBWC X site is a good place to check for updates: <https://x.com/usibwc>

#### Minute 328 – Mexico



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