

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

El Paso, Texas
August 24, 2026

JOINT REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL ENGINEERS ON
COLORADO RIVER BINATIONAL WORK GROUPS
AND THE SALINITY PILOT PROGRAM FOR 2027-2028

To the Honorable Commissioners
International Boundary and Water Commission,
United States and Mexico
El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua

Sir and Madam:

In accordance with your instructions, we respectfully submit for your consideration this Joint Report, proposing the activities to be carried out by the Colorado River Binational Work Groups and describing the implementing details of the Colorado River Salinity Pilot Program to be applied in 2027 and 2028.

Under Minute No. 319, "Interim International Cooperative Measures in the Colorado River Basin through 2017 and Extension of Minute 318 Cooperative Measures to Address the Continued Effects of the April 2010 Earthquake in the Mexicali Valley, Baja California," dated November 20, 2012, and Minute No. 323, "Extension of Cooperative Measures and Adoption of a Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan in the Colorado River Basin," signed September 21, 2017, the Commission established various Colorado River Binational Work Groups to support implementation of those Minutes. The Commission is developing a proposed new Minute (Minute No. 334) to extend and modify the terms of Minute 323 through December 31, 2028.

This Joint Report reflects the Commission's interest in continuing or modifying the existing Colorado River Binational Work Groups, and provides details of the tasks, activities, and issues assigned to the Hydrology, Environmental, Salinity, and Flow Variability and Operations Work Groups. Tasks, activities, and issues assigned to the Projects Work Group are outlined in the proposed Minute. Further, this Joint Report details implementing

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procedures for the Salinity Pilot Program to be applied in the years 2027 and 2028 proposed to be established in the new Minute. The objectives of the Salinity Pilot Program are: to test Colorado River system operations using a monthly physical salinity limit at the Northerly International Boundary (NIB), depending on the volume of monthly Colorado River water deliveries to Mexico; to realize the full Colorado River system benefit resulting from the combined reductions to the annual schedule of deliveries to the United States and Mexico; and to avoid potential adverse effects to operations in the United States and Mexico.

A. BINATIONAL HYDROLOGY WORK GROUP

The Hydrology Work Group will perform the following activities:

1. Continue to follow and update the existing Binational Hydrology Work Group Communications Plan, and, in accordance with the plan, meet regularly to review basin conditions and projections.
2. Study and analyze data related to the basin, considering runoff, reservoir elevations, and other considerations, to identify mechanisms to enable the United States and Mexico to engage in joint planning activities and decision-making in both countries for the period after 2028.
3. Monitor the risks of reaching certain low elevation reservoir conditions and identify hydrologic conditions associated with these risks.
4. In the event high elevation reservoir conditions are forecasted, analyze the impact on the Colorado River system of the United States and Mexico foregoing delivery of additional waters under high elevation reservoir conditions that they would otherwise be entitled to receive.
5. Provide the most current information on basin conditions from the Government of the United States as often as required, including precipitation, streamflow, and water storage conditions in the basin and their historical behavior; the consumptive water uses for the different basin states and the historical trend; and the status of the determination of shortage conditions in the Colorado River Basin within the United

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States, including, on a monthly basis, the 24-Month Study. This will enable the Government of Mexico to continue to systematically track the basin conditions and prepare in a timely manner for any potential impacts to its water deliveries.

6. Annually in 2027 and 2028, furnish information from the United States on the natural causes for the current and projected reservoir elevations of Lake Mead.
7. Prepare a draft report by December 31, 2027, and a final report by March 31, 2028, that describe the work group's activities and include recommendations, if any, to the Commissioners.

B. BINATIONAL FLOW VARIABILITY AND OPERATIONS WORK GROUP

The Flow Variability Work Group, reconstituted as the Flow Variability and Operations Work Group in the proposed Minute, will continue to work on the following activities previously identified in Minute 323:

1. Consider potential future studies to implement a pilot program to utilize existing storage capacity at Morelos Dam to reduce daily flow variability.
2. Prepare a scope of work to analyze options for implementing regulatory storage in Mexico.
3. Continue evaluating the relationship between Mexico's monthly request and the minimum flow stipulated in Article 15 of the 1944 Water Treaty.
4. Continue evaluating the communications procedures between both countries regarding the daily flow rate of deliveries.
5. In furtherance of Minute 330, review concepts, including operational mechanisms or infrastructure, that could address disparate impacts to Mexican users depending on whether they receive water delivered by the United States at the NIB or Southerly International Boundary (SIB).
6. Provide recommendations to the Commissioners during the term of the proposed Minute.

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C. BINATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL WORK GROUP

The Environmental Work Group will convene regularly during the term of the proposed Minute to address issues that include:

1. Planning and organizing implementation of the monitoring, habitat maintenance, and water delivery activities, based on available budget.
2. Development and maintenance of an annual comprehensive Water Delivery, Monitoring, and Habitat Maintenance Plan with the support of a binational science expert team, which shall be submitted for approval by the Commissioners.
3. Field verification and reporting of habitat maintenance, monitoring, and water delivery activities, which will be compiled in a draft report with recommendations by May 31, 2028 and a final report to be completed by December 1, 2028 and which will be published upon approval by the Commission. Likewise, the Environmental Work Group could provide recommendations to the Commissioners during the term of the proposed Minute.
4. Providing information on funding and associated work.

D. BINATIONAL SALINITY WORK GROUP

The Salinity Work Group will perform the following tasks:

1. Continue to modernize and/or maintain salinity monitoring equipment in both countries to utilize real-time salinity levels in daily operational decision-making or to inform future operations.
2. In light of the binational cooperation that has occurred on salinity management at the SIB to improve the water quality to approximately 1,200 parts per million U.S. count during the four months critical for agriculture in Mexico (September, October, November, and December), study potential salinity scenarios to include the months of May, June, and July.

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3. Monitor implementation of the 2027-2028 Salinity Pilot Program and provide updates to the Commissioners as may be needed.
4. Consider and evaluate the data regarding the 2027-2028 Salinity Pilot Program in order to prepare and submit a draft report to the Commissioners by May 31, 2028 and a final report by May 31, 2029. This report should also include recommendations for potential future salinity management during reductions in water deliveries to Mexico, taking into consideration Minute No. 242, "Permanent and Definitive Solution to the International Problem of the Salinity of the Colorado River," and the Salinity Pilot Program's results and objectives.
5. Summarize the existing state of the Colorado River between Imperial Dam and the NIB (including recent trends and projections) with respect to salinity of Colorado River waters by means of the following:
 - a. Providing pertinent technical, operational, and other information regarding salinity of Colorado River waters.
 - b. Documenting sources, annual volumes, and salinity (concentrations and loading) of flows between Imperial Dam and the NIB, including, but not limited to, pumped groundwater and potential destinations for that water.
 - c. Evaluating impacts due to the volume and timing of the creation of Mexico's Water Reserve.
6. Analyze and identify the potential impacts of low reservoir levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead on salinity at Imperial Dam and the NIB.
7. Review and analyze monthly salinity peaks both in the Reforma Canal near the NIB and the Sanchez Mejorada Canal at the SIB, including their correlation with monthly historical and current agricultural crop schedules and salinity tolerances of those crops within Mexico's Irrigation District 014.

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8. Undertake any other activities related to the Salinity Pilot Program that may be assigned by the Commission.

E. SALINITY PILOT PROGRAM

During the Salinity Pilot Program, monitoring and evaluation activities will be conducted to analyze Pilot Program results compared to the following: 1) Imperial Dam and NIB official salinity values; 2) annual salinity and differential calculations; and 3) the volumes delivered at Imperial Dam and NIB.

1. U.S. activities:
 - a. The United States will continue to collect the routine daily weekday samples at the NIB to determine electrical conductivity (EC) (subject to possible interruptions due to weather, work schedules, and security considerations) and twice a month for complete lab chemical analysis.
 - b. The U.S. Section will collect NIB samples as follows: one 500 ml bottle for Reclamation delivered to Reclamation on the day sampled; two 500 ml bottles for Mexico to be refrigerated until picked up by the Mexican Section; and one 500 ml sample retained by the U.S. Section.
 - c. The U.S. Section will analyze daily NIB samples for EC and share the results with Reclamation and Mexico by the close of business on the day they are collected.
 - d. Reclamation will continue to collect the routine daily Imperial Dam samples. Two daily samples per month will undergo complete lab chemical analysis.
 - e. Reclamation will collect Imperial Dam samples as follows: one 500 ml bottle retained by Reclamation; one 500 ml bottle for the U.S. Section; and two 500 ml bottles for the Mexican Section delivered to the U.S. Section approximately two business days

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after collected. The U.S. Section will refrigerate the bottles until they are picked up by the Mexican Section.

- f. Reclamation will analyze daily Imperial Dam samples for EC, and report the results to the U.S. Section by the close of business two days after they are collected.
 - g. Through Reclamation, the United States will continue funding for the operations and maintenance of the existing real time Colorado River salinity monitoring equipment at the following stations: USGS 09429490 Colorado River Above Imperial Dam, AZ-CA; USGS 09522005 Colorado River Below Cooper Wasteway Near Yuma, AZ; USGS 09534000 Yuma Main Drain Above Arizona-Sonora Boundary; and USGS 09534550 242 Lateral Above Main Drain at AZ-Sonora Boundary through agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey and in accordance with established protocols. The USGS 09522005 Colorado River Below Cooper Wasteway Near Yuma, AZ site has been determined to be near NIB for the purposes of the Salinity Pilot Program and has demonstrated to produce data that correlate with NIB multi-station composite samples analyzed in the laboratory.
2. Mexico Activities:
- a. Mexico will conduct calibration and maintenance for the existing EC sensor at Morelos Dam, to be completed by January 1, 2027, and develop a calibration and maintenance plan that will be implemented during the Salinity Pilot Program.
 - b. Mexico will analyze available daily NIB and Imperial Dam samples for EC and salinity and report the results to the U.S. Section within

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10 business days after the samples are received from the United States.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

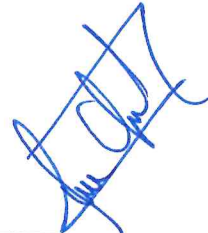
We therefore recommend the following to the Commissioners:

1. That the Commission approve the activities proposed in this Joint Report and that they be implemented as described above.

Respectfully,



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Principal Engineer
United States Section



Luis Antonio Rascon Mendoza
Principal Engineer
Mexican Section