

Dear Interested Members of the Public,

Happy New Year! The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to work in partnership with the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and Mexico to advance the commitments made in the binational [agreements](#) known as Minute 328 and the EPA-CONAGUA Statement of Intent. Below are a few updates since our October 3, 2023, message:

Rehabilitation and expansion of the USIBWC's South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP):

- On October 25, President Biden requested \$310 million in Fiscal Year 2024 emergency supplemental funding to the USIBWC to add to the existing funding for the expansion of the SBIWTP. Without Congressional approval of the requested supplemental funding, there will be delay in completing construction by several years as well as increases in overall long-term costs, due to inflation and additional ramp-up needed with separate construction phases. The White House funding request is detailed [here](#) (see page 7).
- On November 15, the House Transportation & Infrastructure committee voted to authorize USIBWC to accept funds for activities relating to wastewater treatment and flood control works, and for other purposes. Before this amendment, which can be found [here](#), can go into effect, Congress needs to approve it.
- On December 8, the USIBWC issued the request for proposals for the design and construction of the SBIWTP expansion project. The press release for this notice is [here](#).
- On January 12, EPA and USIBWC finalized the Interagency Agreement which will transfer funds set aside by the 2020 U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement to USIBWC for the design and construction of the SBIWTP expansion project. USIBWC will now take the lead on the project. To receive updates from USIBWC, please scan the following QR code (or use this [link](#)) and follow the instructions to be placed on their mailing list. Information about USIBWC Citizens Forum Meetings can be found [here](#).



Status of Projects in Mexico

- A groundbreaking ceremony for a new 18 million gallons per day (mgd) wastewater treatment plant at San Antonio de los Buenos (six miles south of the border in Tijuana) was held by the Mexican government on January 11, 2024. Mexico expects to complete construction of the plant this year. This project will result in significant coastal water quality improvements.
- Mexico completed repair and reconnection of the pressurized sewage line from Pump Station 1A to the coastline in late November and is now testing the line. This project will significantly reduce dry-weather cross-border wastewater flows in the Tijuana River.

- The project for rehabilitation and flood protection of Pump Station 1 will go out for bid in early 2024 and will receive partial funding from EPA's Border Water Infrastructure Program. This project should be completed in 2026 and will help reduce cross-border flows in the Tijuana River and prevent catastrophic flooding of the pump station, such as the flooding that occurred in 2019, which resulted in nearly one year of transborder dry-weather flows in the Tijuana River.
- The rehabilitation of the largest wastewater conveyance pipe in Tijuana, the International Collector -- which has a capacity of 60 mgd -- is underway and expected to be completed in Spring 2024. This project will significantly reduce the possibility of catastrophic binational wastewater flows.
- The Los Laureles I Pump Station project rehabilitation, funded completely by Mexico, has been procured and is expected to be constructed in 2024. This project will reduce cross-border flows in Goat Canyon.

On October 31, EPA hosted a virtual public meeting; the San Diego Air Pollution Control District joined EPA and USIBWC to provide information about EPA-funded air monitors being installed throughout the Tijuana River Valley to collect data about odor-causing gases, such as hydrogen sulfide. Slides are on the EPA website [here](#).

In addition, in response to requests by California agencies and elected officials to provide an update on the efforts to address the cross-border flows, EPA and USIBWC provided testimony at two recent hearings. The recording of the California Coastal Commission public meeting on November 15 is [here](#) (at 2:30:40) and a recording of the December 1 California Senate Select Committee on California-Mexico Cooperation and Dialogue is [here](#).

You may continue to refer to EPA's [webpage](#) for news about this important challenge. If you have specific questions or concerns about air quality or odors in the Tijuana River Valley area, please reach out to the San Diego Air Pollution Control District at their [webpage](#) or email the District at airinfo@sdapcd.org. If you have questions, comments, or concerns for EPA on water infrastructure in the region, please contact our team at TijuanaWater@epa.gov.

Thank you for your continued partnership in addressing cross-border pollution in the Tijuana River Watershed. We look forward to updating you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Andrew Sawyers and Tomás Torres, EPA Co-Chairs