



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

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USIBWC ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF IOI PIPELINE REHABILITATION IN NOGALES, ARIZONA

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (USIBWC) has completed rehabilitation of a half-century-old wastewater pipeline known as the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI) in Nogales, Arizona.

The pipeline, installed between 1970 and 1971, conveys wastewater from Nogales and Rio Rico, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, over a length of 9.9 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) in Rio Rico.

Due to funding constraints, the USIBWC divided the project into five phases that prioritized the most deteriorated pipeline segments. The first contract, awarded on July 13, 2021, to SAK Construction (SAK) for Phases 1 to 3 for \$13.8 million, was completed on August 14, 2023. The second contract was awarded on September 30, 2022, to SAK for Phases 4 and 5 for \$15.3 million. In April 2024, SAK completed the rehabilitation of the pipeline and manholes.

Only the restoration of areas disturbed during construction remains to complete the project.

This project was first awarded for design 10 years ago, and USIBWC is pleased to finally complete this critical rehabilitation after overcoming various challenges, including agreements with stakeholders, permitting, and cost-sharing.

“This project will reduce the risk of sewage spills historically experienced by Nogales from collapsed portions of the IOI,” said Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, P.E., USIBWC Commissioner. “We would like to especially thank the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality for their support and assistance. Our gratitude is also extended to the City of Nogales and Santa Cruz County, as well as to our funding partners, the Mexican Section of the IBWC, the State of Arizona, and Freeport McMoRan Foundation.”

The USIBWC applauds SAK for executing the project proficiently. This project required a lot of coordination, and SAK took on most of it.

SAK used Cured-in-Place-Pipe (CIPP) technology, in which a liner was inserted into the existing pipeline, then cured to form a solid pipeline inside the old structure. Because this technology didn't require excavation of the pipeline, it minimized traffic disruptions, reduced construction costs, and shortened the project's duration.

This project was undertaken because the pipeline reached the end of its useful life. Long-standing structural integrity issues resulted in years of periodic releases of untreated sewage along the length of the IOI in the communities of Nogales and Rio Rico.

Last month, the City of Nogales agreed to transfer its ownership of the IOI to the USIBWC. The agreement will take effect once USIBWC receives \$12.5 million for operation and maintenance of the pipeline through a congressional appropriation or other funding.

The IOI is comprised of reinforced and unreinforced concrete pipe that ranges in size between 24 inches and 42 inches in diameter.

The USIBWC is a federal government agency and the U.S. component of the International Boundary and Water Commission, which applies the boundary and water treaties of the United States and Mexico and settles differences that may arise in their application. The USIBWC operates and maintains the NIWTP.

For more information:

Frank Fisher
Public Affairs Chief
frank.fisher@ibwc.gov
(915) 494-6027

