



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

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USIBWC IMPLEMENTS WATER QUALITY TESTING PROGRAM IN TIJUANA RIVER AND CANYONS

The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission awarded a five-year, \$1.9 million contract to EGC-AGEISS Joint Venture of San Antonio, Texas, to collect water, sediment, and trash samples in the Tijuana River and adjacent canyons along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The sampling program was developed with input from the regulatory community and the Minute 320 water quality workgroup. The purpose is to characterize transboundary flows and develop an on-going warehouse of water quality and sediment data.

The study also satisfies the requirement to develop and implement a Tijuana River Valley Monitoring Program (TRVMP) as outlined in the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board-issued permit for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant.

“This monitoring program honors the commitment we made under the Board’s time schedule order issued in 2023,” said **Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, P.E., USIBWC Commissioner**. “Combined with \$31 million in repairs at the plant, the \$600 million expansion we will soon start, our monitoring of Mexico’s commitment to Minute 328 projects, and taking urgent actions to ensure zero transboundary flows during the dry season, the IBWC is taking concrete steps towards pollution prevention in the South Bay area.”

U.S. Sen. Laphonza Butler: “For far too long, San Diegans have suffered significantly from pollution and sewage flowing across the border and into their communities. I applaud USIBWC implementing a monitoring program to make sure that our government has the necessary information to tackle this challenge head on.”

U.S. Rep. Juan Vargas: “It’s good to see the IBWC and Commissioner Giner implement this new program to help us better monitor transboundary flows, water quality, and sediment data. From securing \$400 million in federal funding to double the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant’s capacity, to bringing the CDC to South Bay communities to investigate the pollution’s impact on public health, we’re continuing to work to address Tijuana River Valley pollution using all available resources. We won’t let up.”

U.S. Rep. Scott Peters: “This data is critical because it will help us determine where these toxic substances are coming from and who is responsible. We must identify the source if we want to fix the problem in the long term. The communities hurt by these contaminated flows need to know what’s in them. I’m very glad IBWC is so focused on ending this crisis.”

U.S. Rep. Mike Levin: “I’m glad to see the USIBWC implement long overdue water quality testing in the Tijuana River Valley. This environmental and public health disaster has gone on far too long. The information collected from these tests will provide a more detailed understanding of the issues plaguing the Tijuana River Valley, help track progress on cleanup efforts, and help us advocate for more federal resources. I’m committed to continuing to work with my colleagues in the San Diego Congressional delegation, local and state governments, and the USIBWC to finally put a stop to this crisis once and for all.”

U.S. Rep. Sara Jacobs: “I’ve heard from so many constituents – including parents with young kids and our Navy SEALs who train in the ocean – about water quality concerns because of the Tijuana River Valley crisis. Everyone should be able to live, play, and work on our coastline and beaches without fear for their health and safety. That’s why I’m glad the USIBWC is implementing water quality testing so we have more information and can make more progress to end this public health and safety emergency.”

The TRVMP is designed to provide information to answer questions such as:

- How far downstream from the U.S.-Mexico border do transboundary flows travel?
- Under what circumstances do the pathogens and indicator bacteria reach the ocean and travel to beaches or cause or contribute to beach closures?
- Under what circumstances do transboundary wastewater flows from the canyon collectors reach the Tijuana River, Tijuana River Estuary, and Pacific Ocean coastal shoreline?
- What trash pollution is generated in Mexico that might flow through the canyon collectors and cross into the Tijuana River Valley and the Tijuana River Estuary?

The study will begin in November. The program will analyze water and sediment samples on a routine basis for bacteria, industrial pollutants, pesticides, metals, and more.

A solid waste survey will also be conducted in years 2 and 4 of the program to determine the type, amount and potential sources of trash in Smuggler’s Gulch and Goat Canyon.

For more information:

Frank Fisher

Public Affairs Chief

frank.fisher@ibwc.gov

(915) 494-6027

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