



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
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CEREMONY MARKS COMPLETION OF INTERNATIONAL TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE

Officials from the United States and Mexico today held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego, California to mark the recent upgrade of the plant to secondary treatment standards. The SBIWTP, owned and operated by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), treats wastewater originating in Tijuana, Mexico.

Construction of the upgrade began in January 2009 by contractor PCL Construction of Tempe, Arizona. The contract, totaling \$92.7 million, covered construction of an activated sludge secondary treatment process at the SBIWTP to improve effluent quality. The plant had been providing advanced primary treatment since that phase of the construction was completed in 1997. The treated effluent is discharged 3.5 miles offshore into the Pacific Ocean.

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade, which doubles the original plant footprint, was constructed in accordance with agreements with Mexico that call for activated sludge secondary treatment facilities in the United States to treat up to 25 million gallons per day of sewage from Tijuana. In accordance with those agreements, Mexico paid for a portion of the plant's original construction cost and contributes to ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

“The plant we are celebrating today provides a higher level of treatment than the original plant. For those of us who care about the environment and the quality of our coastal waters, we have reason to celebrate this milestone,” said U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon indicated that this upgrade fully complies with the agreements established in IBWC Minute 283 by achieving secondary treatment as originally planned, providing water treated to a higher quality with a great potential for reuse in Mexico when needed.

The secondary treatment facilities became operational in November 2010 although other aspects of plant construction, such as landscaping, sidewalks, and punch list items were only recently completed. The upgrade is designed to comply with water quality standards applicable in the United States for total suspended solids, biochemical oxygen demand, and impacts on certain microorganisms.

Participants in the ribbon-cutting ceremony included the two IBWC Commissioners; Guadalupe Osuna Millan, Governor of Baja California; Linda Adams, Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency; Brian P. Bilbray, Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Imperial Beach; Doug Liden with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which funded the U.S. share of the first phase of the construction which was the advanced primary plant; and representatives of construction contractor PCL Construction, Inc., design firm S & B Infrastructure, Ltd., and the contractor that operates the treatment plant, Veolia Water North America.

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