



**International Boundary and Water Commission
United States and Mexico
United States Section**

For immediate release
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**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROMOTES
WATER PROGRAMS IN SOUTH TEXAS**

The United States Section of the [International Boundary and Water Commission](#), United States and Mexico (USIBWC) hosted a meeting in Weslaco, Texas on July 27, 2022, to convene federal and state agencies who can provide support to farmers, ranchers and rural communities affected by the Rio Grande drought and other water challenges. USIBWC Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner was joined by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Undersecretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small, Commissioner Bobby Janecka of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and representatives from USDA's Farm Production and Conservation mission area and the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation.

Invited guests representing agriculture and municipal water interests attended the meeting at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center Auditorium in Weslaco where they learned about a variety of funding opportunities and programs.

"The irrigation districts in the Valley have told me about projects they'd like to implement to become more resilient to water supply challenges. I wanted to bring the other federal agencies to the Valley to see how they could help get some of those projects done," said Commissioner Giner.

USDA currently offers a suite of programs to help agricultural producers recover from losses to drought as well as build resilience to future climate challenges. This includes disaster assistance, loans, risk management, and conservation programs. Looking ahead, USDA will continue to serve as a leader on using the best science, research, and conservation tools to support producers in building resiliency across their operations and mitigating the impacts of drought, floods, wildfire, and other climate-related disaster events while ensuring the Department

is doing its part to support clean air, water, and communities. USDA's [farmers.gov website](#) offers important disaster protection and recovery resources including the [Disaster Discovery Tool](#) and a [drought-specific webpage](#).

“When you live in the West, you know the importance of water,” said USDA Undersecretary Torres Small. “Under the leadership of President Biden, Vice President Harris and Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, Rural Development is committed to safe and clean water and waterways—as a human right and an economic driver. Through record drought conditions, federal and local partners will need to work together to deliver this essential resource to farmers and ranchers, rural communities, and families living in rural towns. Rural Development is proud to partner with people here on the ground to upgrade rural infrastructure so rural people can continue to access the water they need regardless of the weather.”

The Bureau of Reclamation works cooperatively with states, tribes, and local entities to plan for and implement actions to increase water supply through investments to modernize existing infrastructure and avoid potential water conflicts. Through WaterSMART, Reclamation offers programs to assist irrigation and water districts, tribes, states and other entities with projects that build long-term resiliency to drought and conserve and use water more efficiently. WaterSMART provides support for the Department of the Interior's priorities, including investing in infrastructure and proactively addressing water storage, recycling and provision to communities. Since 2010, Reclamation's WaterSMART Program has leveraged over \$940 million in federal funds with over \$3 billion in non-federal cost share for 887 water resources planning and on-the-ground improvement projects in the Western United States. For more information, please visit the WaterSMART website at www.usbr.gov/watersmart.

The International Boundary and Water Commission is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico and settling differences that may arise in the application of the treaties. Along the Rio Grande, the Commission operates Amistad and Falcon Dams, which store water for both countries, as well as the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project.

For more information:

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