



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

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### **COMMISSION SIGNS COLORADO RIVER AGREEMENT**

After several years of discussions that included the participation of federal and state authorities and nongovernmental organizations from both countries, officials with the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, today signed Minute 319, entitled, "Interim International Cooperative Measures in the Colorado River Basin through 2017 and Extension of Minute 318 Cooperative Measures to Address the Continued Effects of the April 2010 Earthquake in the Mexicali Valley, Baja California." The agreement, which will remain in effect for five years, provides for a series of joint cooperative actions between the two countries, including:

- Extends humanitarian measures from a 2010 agreement, Minute 318, to allow Mexico to defer delivery of a portion of its Colorado River allotment while it continues to make repairs to earthquake-damaged infrastructure.
- Provides additional Colorado River water to Mexico during certain high elevation reservoir conditions at Lake Mead when additional water is available to users in the United States, providing benefits to both countries.
- Establishes proactive basin operations during certain low elevation reservoir conditions at Lake Mead by applying water delivery reductions in order to deter more severe reductions in the future.

- Establishes a program of Intentionally Created Mexican Allocation (ICMA) whereby Mexican water resulting from conservation and new water sources projects could essentially be held in the United States for subsequent delivery to Mexico as determined by it through its planning processes.
- Implements measures to address salinity impacts stemming from the joint cooperative actions, in conformance with the provisions of Minute 242, entitled, “Permanent and Definitive Solution to the International Problem of the Salinity of the Colorado River,” dated August 30, 1973.
- Through conservation projects, generates water for the environment of the Colorado River limitrophe and delta.
- Provides for U.S. investment in water infrastructure and environmental projects in Mexico. These investments provide water benefits to the U.S. agencies in exchange for their funding and generate water for Mexico over the long term.
- Outlines potential opportunities for future cooperation between the United States and Mexico on topics such as environmental restoration, water conservation, system operations, and new water sources projects.
- Establishes the expectation that the Commission will conclude another agreement in the future to extend or replace the substantive provisions of Minute 319.
- Commits the United States and Mexico to give expedited consideration to applicable issues that must be addressed for the potential construction of a connection between the All-American Canal in the United States and Mexico's Colorado River-Tijuana Aqueduct, as a backup in case of emergencies or failures in the Mexican aqueduct.

"The United States and Mexico have been working closely for several years to see how we could improve management of the Colorado River to benefit both countries," said U.S.

Commissioner Edward Drusina of the International Boundary and Water Commission. "Minute 319 gives us new tools to address the impacts of drought and climate change. It also sets the stage for cooperation between our two countries for many years to come," said Commissioner Drusina.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon highlighted the importance of this agreement by emphasizing that it constitutes a historic event, which, by using the 1944 Water Treaty as its basis, enables work to build toward the future in order to guarantee sustainability in the region and in particular future water supply for Mexican communities. He highlighted that this agreement provides the foundation for future unprecedented negotiations to benefit Colorado River basin residents in both countries.

Commission officials signed the agreement during a ceremony in Coronado, California, which included the participation of Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the Interior; Michael Connor, Commissioner of the United States Bureau of Reclamation; Ambassador Julian Ventura Valero, Undersecretary for North America, Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Relations; and Engineer Jose Luis Luege Tamargo, General Director of Mexico's National Water Commission. It was immediately approved by the governments of both countries.

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the two countries. Under the 1944 Water Treaty, Mexico is allotted 1.5 million acre-feet (1850 million cubic meters) per year of water from the Colorado River.

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