



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

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### PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE BORDER SANITATION AND WATER QUALITY PRESENTED AT SUMMIT

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC) convened more than 230 experts from both countries in San Antonio, Texas on March 16-18 during the Binational Border Sanitation and Water Quality Summit. The theme of the Summit was “Today’s challenges, tomorrow’s opportunities.” Participants attended a series of sessions in the areas of Sanitation, Technology, Water Quality, and Financing where they worked to identify activities and funding to improve wastewater collection and treatment and consider a framework for binational efforts to improve sanitation and water quality in border communities.

At the end of the Summit, moderators for each of the four areas presented conclusions and recommendations covering a wide variety of issues. Some of the key conclusions and recommendations were:

- Promote reuse of treated effluent and educate the public on this topic.
- Promote the effective use of available funds by means of good planning.
- Improve links between civil society and water and wastewater utilities.
- Consider using new technologies, especially those that reduce energy costs, and other green technologies.
- Consider cogeneration at wastewater treatment plants to reduce energy costs.
- Consider wetlands as an effective small-scale treatment option.
- Develop strategies to address point source and nonpoint source water pollution.
- Harmonize water quality standards among states and between the United States and Mexico, taking into consideration the method of collection, the parameters, and the water quality goals.
- Collect and exchange water quality data in a systematic fashion.
- Provide adequate training for wastewater treatment plant operators.
- Identify multiple funding sources to develop projects.
- Partner with the private sector to provide operations and maintenance funding up front to avoid deferred maintenance problems.
- Develop utilities’ institutional capacity to partner with private funding sources.

“I was pleased with the quality of the participants and their presentations at the Summit. We identified some of the challenges we face in improving water quality and sanitation along the border and heard some excellent suggestions about ways to work more effectively in the future,” said U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon indicated that he was pleasantly surprised by the great interest that the Summit generated in border communities as well as among the entities responsible for addressing these issues on both sides of the border. He added that he is sure that the results of the Summit will allow mechanisms for cooperation to be presented to both governments to improve border sanitation and water quality.

Presentations and recommendations from the Summit will be published on the web pages of the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the Commission in the near future.

For more information:

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