



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
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PUMP PROBLEM REPAIRED AT SOUTH BAY INTERNATIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, TIJUANA RIVER FLOW TO U.S. HALTED

A pump failure at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) that caused 1.5 million gallons of untreated Mexican sewage to flow into the Tijuana River for 2.5 hours on April 4 has been repaired. The repairs to critical influent pumps were completed on April 26 by Veolia Water North America, the company that operates the SBIWTP under contract to the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). With the repair, the plant is better able to handle peak sewage flows. At the request of the USIBWC, Mexican officials have resumed operation of a pump station in Mexico to prevent water in the Tijuana River from entering the United States.

Under normal operations, the Mexican pump diverts dry-weather runoff and secondary treated effluent from reclamation plants in Mexico out of the Tijuana River and into the Mexican conveyance system. Since early April, this pump station had been shut down to reduce peak flows to the SBIWTP and prevent a spill of untreated sewage. During this period, effluent from the Mexican water reclamation plants and runoff had been entering the United States.

Since the April 4 incident, the USIBWC has updated its spill notification procedures in an effort to provide more timely notice to interested stakeholders. Moreover, plant operators have taken steps, such as upgrading warning systems, to prevent the problem from recurring.

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