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USIBWC CHIEF DURAN TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE ABOUT BUDGET ISSUES, SAN DIEGO-TIJUANA SANITATION PROJECT

Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (USIBWC), testified yesterday in Washington, DC before the Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. This was Duran's first appearance before Congress since his appointment by President George W. Bush to the post of Commissioner last month.

Duran discussed President Bush's \$38.8 million budget request for the agency for fiscal year 2005. The funds will be used to support Commission activities along the entire border including operation and maintenance of three international wastewater treatment plants, two international dams and power plants, five diversion dams, six flood control projects, joint water quality programs, and boundary preservation work. Additionally, a portion of the funds will be used for planning-level studies, design, environmental documentation, and construction related to Commission projects. The USIBWC's current year appropriation is \$29.2 million.

Commissioner Duran testified that \$2 million of the fiscal year 2005 request pertains to implementation of Minute 311, "Recommendations for Secondary Treatment in Mexico of the Sewage Emanating from the Tijuana River Area in Baja California, Mexico." This agreement, which was reached with the Mexican Section of the Commission on February 20, is designed to

meet the objectives of U.S. Public Law 106-457 to address the border sanitation problem at San Diego-Tijuana.

“Rapid implementation of this agreement is a top priority for the USIBWC,”

Commissioner Duran told the subcommittee. “The citizens of Southern California deserve no less.”

Commissioner Duran informed the subcommittee that a binational effort involving the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the IBWC is required to move the project forward. He reiterated his support, noting, “I am committed to making this project work.”

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