

For immediate release
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U.S. AND MEXICO RELEASE RESULTS OF THIRD PHASE RIVER POLLUTION STUDY

Today the United States and Mexico announce the publication of the final phase of a multi-year binational study on toxic substances along the international boundary portion of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo, which concludes that chemicals found in the river's water, sediment, and fish do not pose an immediate threat to human or aquatic life.

The study was coordinated by the United States and Mexican sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) under Minute 289, and funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico's national water agency, Comisión Nacional del Agua (CNA). The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and CNA conducted field data collection for this project in November 1998.

United States Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran and Mexican Commissioner J. Arturo Herrera of the IBWC were pleased to coordinate this important binational study. The two countries have demonstrated great cooperation in the collection and reporting of water quality data which will be used by decision makers and stakeholders on both sides of the border to improve water quality in the Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

"This is an important step in evaluating the health of the river and its impact on human health and the environment. With this determination, we can now refocus our efforts on other aspects of the river's health," said U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene.

The study completes a series of three binational studies of pollution and includes special emphasis on biological community assessments of aquatic organisms. It considered factors such as habitat alteration, land use, water/sediment quality and flow variations. The results indicate that some metals in sediment, chlorides, sulfates, and dissolved solids are aspects of concern, but they do not present immediate risks to human health and aquatic life in the reach of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo studied. The concentrations and types of pollutants found are consistent with the population, land use and industrial activities along the border. Nevertheless, additional studies are recommended.

An electronic copy of the report is available on the Internet at www.ibwc.state.gov. To request a hard copy of the report in English, please contact Environmental Protection Specialist Daniel Borunda at 915-832-4701. The report in Spanish may be requested from Engineer Ramiro Luján G. of the Mexican Section of IBWC at 011-52-656-613-9942 or via the Internet at www.sre.gob.mx/cila.

For more information:

Sally Spener, 915-832-4175, sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov

Daniel Borunda, 915-832-4701, danielborunda@ibwc.state.gov