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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

February 13, 2024

Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, P.E., Commissioner
International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section
4191 North Mesa St.
El Paso, TX 79902-1441

Subject: Mexico's Annual Operating Plan for the Rio Grande Basin

Dear Commissioner Giner:

Following an informative Rio Grande Valley stakeholder meeting on February 8, it is imperative to collect additional information to supplement the meeting discussions. Specifically, per Minute 325, Resolution 5, of the 1944 Water Treaty, I would like to request the "Annual Operating Plan for the Rio Grande Basin" showing water allocations for Mexican users, including Mexico's considerations for Rio Grande water deliveries to the United States. The last such submission I received was for the Fall 2022-Spring 2023 irrigation cycle, but the Minute requires an annual exchange.

I cannot overstate the importance of transparency and data sharing for the improved joint management of the shared river system, and the recent modeling work by the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) has provided useful insights. As you have previously mentioned, the models and data analysis that are commonly used to manage river systems do not exist on the Rio Grande. This must change.

Farmers and cities in South Texas depend on the waters of the Rio Grande. Due to Mexico's repeated non-compliance, we face an ominous future. In years of less precipitation, it is particularly critical to cooperate to ensure Texas residents receive their deliveries. Recently, there have been glaring examples to the contrary, especially since 2020. It is becoming increasingly clear that it will be hydrologically impossible for Mexico to meet its treaty obligations this five-year cycle.

The lack of reliability and predictability in Mexico's treaty deliveries has left Texas stakeholders with little confidence. After accounting for domestic use, dead storage, and our operating reserve, as of January 27, 2024, less than 11% of our country's conservation capacity remains for agricultural use. This figure represents about 22% of our annual irrigation needs and has forced many farmers to abandon plans for this year's crops. A recent study by Texas A&M University shows the loss of irrigated crop production in South Texas would lead to an estimated \$993 million loss in economic output in 2024. As a result, Mexico's "Annual Operating Plan" is a crucial resource that Texas stakeholders urgently need to anticipate and address concerns regarding water availability—and especially for the upcoming growing season as they face grave uncertainty.

Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, P.E., Commissioner
February 13, 2024
Page 2 of 2

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to continued collaboration between our agencies and the United States and Mexico on our shared water goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bobby Janecka", written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Bobby Janecka, Commissioner
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

CC: Commissioner Adriana Reséndez Maldonado, IBWC, Mexican Section
Ing. José "Pepe" Gutiérrez Ramírez, Manager, Engineering and Binational Water
Affairs, CONAGUA
Ing. Homey Bon Santoyo, Technical Director, Rio Bravo Basin Agency, CONAGUA