

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGIONAL WATER BOARD
MARCH 19, 2019**

ITEM 5

SUBJECT

INFORMATIONAL ITEM REGARDING WATER QUALITY AT THE U.S./MEXICO BORDER IN CALEXICO, CALIFORNIA

DISCUSSION

Pollution problems at the border near Calexico are correlated to historical and current problems in Mexicali. The pollution originates from several sources: sewage system failures, maquiladora (factory) discharges, trash, storm water runoff and agricultural runoff. Both countries acknowledged the poor water quality in the region as far back as the 1940's, but took little action until 1980, after the situation had worsened due to the population boom and industrial development in Mexicali. The U.S. and Mexico sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) that year adopted a treaty that established water quality standards at the border and called for the elimination of Mexico's raw sewage discharges by 1982. When these attempts failed because of the crumbling wastewater infrastructure, a series of "quick fix" emergency steps were implemented in various locations in Mexicali in 1992 and in 2007. Currently, raw sewage is being discharged in Mexicali which makes its way into Calexico. The discharges occur, on the average of, once per month.

The Colorado River Basin, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is a member of the Bi-National Technical Advisory Committee (BTC). Members include: IBWC, CILA (Mexico's IBWC), U.S. EPA, NADBank, and other State of Baja California Officials. Staff of the RWQCB meet bi-monthly with members of the BTC to discuss issues on both sides of the border, share data, and serve in an advisory capacity to solve pollution issues on both sides of the border.

POLICY ISSUE

Water Quality at U.S./Mexico Border in Calexico, California

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A Informational Item Only

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

N/A Informational Item Only

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A Informational Item Only