



The Regional Colorado River Conveyance Feasibility Study

San
Diego
County
Water
Authority

FACT SHEET

Background

San Diego County and Tijuana share more than a border -- they share a common source of water, the Colorado River. A large measure of the water imported to San Diego County by the Water Authority is from the Colorado River. During dry years, the Tijuana-Rosarito-Tecate metropolitan area also relies heavily on water delivered via an aqueduct from the Colorado River.

study is to gather technical data so U.S. and Mexican government leaders can evaluate whether a binational aqueduct may be a practical, cost-effective option for the border region. At this point, neither country is committing to go beyond the feasibility stage of the study. In defining the parameters of the study, the participating agencies agreed that each country would transport water it owns in any future aqueduct.

The study will:

- Examine potential aqueduct routes, including routes exclusively in Mexico, exclusively in the United States, or in both countries.
- Identify potential sites for related water storage and water treatment facilities.
- Refine cost estimates for U.S. routes identified in a study conducted by the Water Authority in 1996.
- Evaluate issues such as geologic features, seismic risks, environmental considerations and costs for each route.

Consultants from both countries are performing work for the study. The study began in late 1999, and will take approximately 18 months to complete.

Potential Benefits of the Study

For San Diego County – Water transfers figure prominently in the Water Authority's Water Resources Plan to meet the region's needs in the future. Technical data from the study will help the Water Authority determine whether a binational aqueduct could deliver transferred water efficiently and cost-effectively.

For Tijuana-Rosarito-Tecate – The study will help Mexican water agencies evaluate whether a binational aqueduct is an economical alternative among other options for increasing water supply to this area.

Border Region



The San Diego County Water Authority is seeking to diversify its water supply to ensure reliability in the future, in the most cost-effective manner possible. Mexico's Acueducto Río Colorado Tijuana, the aqueduct currently delivering water to the Tijuana-Rosarito-Tecate area, is too small to meet the area's needs in the future. In an example of binational collaboration, the Water Authority, the International Boundary and Water Commission and Mexican water agencies have agreed to study the feasibility of sharing a binational aqueduct that would serve both San Diego County and the Tijuana-Rosarito-Tecate area. The participating agencies in Mexico include the Comisión Nacional del Agua and the Comisión Estatal del Agua.

Key Features of the Feasibility Study

The Regional Colorado River Conveyance Feasibility Study will be the first comprehensive evaluation of potential routes for a binational aqueduct to convey Colorado River water. The purpose of the

Collaboration between two countries

For more than 50 years, the United States and Mexico have managed Colorado River water to ensure that both nations benefit from this shared resource. The Law of the River allocates Colorado River water to Mexico and the seven U. S. western states in the Colorado River Basin. The state of California has an annual allocation of 4.4 million acre-feet, with additional

An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons or enough water to supply the household needs of two typical families for one year.

water available during surplus years. All of this water is used in Southern California, including San Diego County.

As part of The Law of the River, a 1944 treaty between the United States and Mexico guarantees 1.5 million acre-feet annually to Mexico, and up to 1.7 million acre-feet in years when a surplus exists. Mexico's Comisión Nacional del Agua allocates this water to urban and agricultural regions of Baja California, including the Tijuana-Rosarito-Tecate area.

The U.S.-Mexico treaty is administered jointly by the U.S. Section and the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission. The commissioners from the U.S. and Mexican sections of the IBWC have ratified the study on behalf of their respective countries and signed treaty Minute No. 301, which authorizes the study in accordance with the 1944 treaty. In addition, both IBWC sections are active participants in the study, providing technical supervision as well as administrative support and oversight.

Technical representatives of the Water Authority, the U.S. and Mexican sections of the IBWC, the Comisión Nacional del Agua and the Comisión Estatal del Agua have established a Binational Technical Committee to oversee the study. The committee developed a detailed scope of work, cost estimates for each study activity and assignment of activities between U.S. and Mexican consultants. In monthly meetings, the Water Authority and other committee members review progress reports detailing the consultants' work.

Cost

The state of California will provide \$3.1 million of the study's cost from proceeds of propositions 204 and 13, water bonds approved by the voters in 1996 and 2000, respectively. The Water Authority has committed up to \$500,000 for the study. Mexican government agencies will provide staffing, project management and other in-kind services to the study.

Agencies Participating in the Regional Colorado River Conveyance Feasibility Study

Binational

International Boundary and Water Commission: International agency consisting of a U.S. Section and a Mexican Section. Administers boundary and water treaties between U.S. and Mexico.

United States

San Diego County Water Authority: An imported water wholesaler delivering water from Northern California and the Colorado River. Provides up to 95 percent of all water used in San Diego County.

Department of Water Resources: A California agency that coordinates with other water agencies to plan and guide the development of California's water resources.

Mexico

Comisión Nacional del Agua: Federal agency that manages Mexico's water resources.

Comisión Estatal del Agua: The state agency that coordinates the development of water and wastewater infrastructure projects in the state of Baja California.

The San Diego County Water Authority is a public agency serving the San Diego region as a wholesale supplier of water imported from the Colorado River and Northern California. The Water Authority works through its 23 member agencies to provide a safe, reliable water supply to more than 2.9 million San Diego County residents.

San Diego County Water Authority

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Note: The Water Authority will be moving in spring 2001. The new address will be:
4677 Overland Ave.
San Diego CA 92123



San Diego County
Water Authority