

COMMENT LETTER

RESPONSES

LOGO - MEXICALI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

September 4, 2000
 Mexicali, Baja California

Jayne Harkins
 Bureau of Reclamation
 Boulder City, Nevada

It has come to the attention of this community organization that the USBR has presented a proposal or criteria for the management of the excess flows in the Lower Colorado River Basin for the next 15 years for the purposes of distributing them among the users in the lower basin and support the state of California in its assignment of Colorado River waters.

1

This means that in the next 15 years, Mexico will cease receiving the excess flows that in the last 50 years averaged on the order of 2,500 million cubic meters annually (2 million acre-feet), limiting us to the 1,850 million cubic meters (1.5 million acre-feet) established in the treaty.

Additionally to this, you have projected, as a water conservation measure, the lining of the All-American Canal, which when implemented would reduce the flow of groundwater toward Mexico.

If these programs are implemented, Mexican territory would be negatively impacted resulting in the following:

- ▶ The availability of water in the Mexicali Valley would be reduced, also, the dynamic levels in the deep wells would be lowered thus causing an increase in the costs of pumping the groundwater.
- ▶ With the elimination of the surface flows, the aquifer would no longer be recharged provoking an increase in the salinity levels in the same.
- ▶ Under normal conditions, there is an increase in the salt content in the agricultural soils of the Mexicali Valley which is reduced using the excess flows to leach these lands; if there are no more excess flows, these lands are condemned to conversion into saline soils.
- ▶ All the water received at Morelos Dam will also see an increase in salinity and this would be delivered to the irrigation district with the cancellation of the flows in the channel of the Colorado River downstream of Morelos; this means that there will no longer be flows into the Colorado River Delta in such a manner that the flora and wildlife which has established itself along the Colorado River in Mexico will be extinguished if there is no water.
- ▶ At the mouth of the Colorado River in the Upper Gulf of California there exist endangered species, such as the *vaquita marina* (a species of porpoise) and the totoaba; independent of the efforts that the Mexican government is making to preclude their extinction, without any inflows of fresh water into the Sea of Cortez, the process of species extinction will accelerate.

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1: As shown in Figure 3.16-1 in the DEIS, the probability of excess flows to Mexico for all years (2000-2050) is not zero (17 percent or greater for all surplus alternatives and baseline.) For the FEIS, the probabilities are 13 percent or greater from 2003 through 2050.

2: See response to Comment 56-16.

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• The harvest of shrimp and curvina in the area of the upper gulf will be reduced if there are no fresh water flows, thus provoking a negative impact on the fishing activities in the region.

3

We want to express our total disagreement with any measure which will affect the availability of water and its effects on the environment in our country, so we are requesting that you contemplate the possibility of including Mexico in the measures decided for the management of the excess flows in the Colorado River.

We appreciate beforehand your attention to this request and take this opportunity to send you cordial greetings.

3: See response to Comment 56-16.

Sincerely,
Mexicali Economic Development Council
(Signed)
Lic. Federico Diaz Gallego
President