

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Diaz-Balart, and Ranking Member Lee,

As you continue to craft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOP) Appropriations bill, we write to express our support for significantly increasing funding for the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

We would like to thank the committee for steadily increasing funding for the IBWC over the last several years. IBWC is a unique federal agency because its official duties support resource and infrastructure management along the U.S.-Mexico border, but it is funded by the State Department which has a unique mission to advance U.S. interests abroad. Historically, the IBWC has been underfunded despite it having an extensive infrastructure portfolio. Critical facilities in the IBWC's portfolio include diversion dams and levee systems in El Paso, Texas, a storage dam and power plant in Falcon Heights, Texas, the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in San Ysidro, California, similar water treatment infrastructure in Nogales, Arizona, and more.

Although there was a significant increase in funding for FY24 from Fiscal Year 2023, the IBWC continues to face obstacles as it seeks to fully carry out its mission. These obstacles include outdated construction equipment, sediment buildup, a need for new levees, ongoing drought, and much more. It also faces an inadequate baseline of funding for staffing and support. It also carries a large maintenance backlog for many of its existing assets. In fact, one of its facilities, the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant— has for years failed to even meet federal Clean Water Act standards. That plant must be brought back into compliance.

Furthermore, the ability of farmers along the U.S.-Mexico border to provide predictable and reliable product deliveries is challenged by water shortages that limit their ability to plant, harvest, and supply food to our countries. Communities that depend on the Rio Grande are some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country and are home to a range of growers and producers that are integral to our nation's food supply systems. More funding for the IBWC will equip our farmers and producers with the ability to negotiate more reliable terms for water deliveries that incentivize Mexico to deliver annually throughout the 5-year period and ensure we have the water we need to put food on the table.

That is why we urge you to prioritize an additional increase of \$20 million for the Salary & Expenses account and an increase of \$200 million for the Construction account, which is above the President's FY 2025 budget request. This vital investment will continue to help the IBWC keep pace with its maintenance backlog while also giving it the ability to focus on projects like levee construction and drought mitigation across the border states. Lastly, the committee will continue to play a critical role in improving the border region's water infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and we look forward to working with you to deliver a FY25 appropriations package that provides significant investments in border communities.

Sincerely,



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



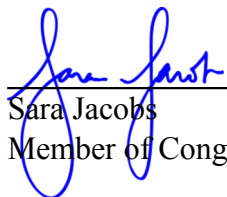
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



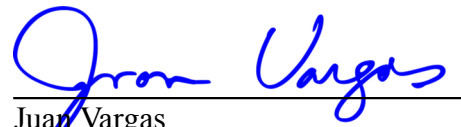
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



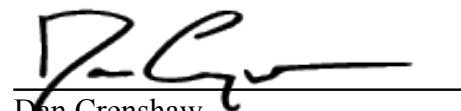
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
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Richard Hudson

Richard Hudson
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Derrick Van Orden

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