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News Flash

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Office of Public
Affairs

USIBWC NOGALES PLANT FOCUS OF REGIONAL AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS



USIBWC Commissioner Dr. Maria-Elena Giner and her Mexican counterpart, Adriana Reséndez Maldonado, attended Regional Commission and Binational Stakeholders meetings for the Nogales, Ariz., and Nogales, Sonora, regions.

During the June 13, 2024, Regional Commission Meeting for the Nogales, Arizona-Nogales, Sonora Region, the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission discussed plans to make repairs at the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP).

Carrying out the planned work at the NIWTP will require Mexico's cooperation to control the volume of wastewater headed to the plant. The NIWTP has been impacted by excess wastewater inflows and sediment, leading to maintenance problems.

John Light, USIBWC's Area Operations Manager for Nogales, said levels of ammonia and organic carbon are above the design limits of the plant. Excessive levels of these nutrients can disrupt the biological processes the facility uses and make treatment more expensive.

The U.S. and Mexican IBWC Sections are also working together to determine the source of heavy metals in wastewater.

Other topics discussed were the International Outfall Interceptor, border sanitation, and transboundary sewage flows.

Regional Commission Meetings are held by the IBWC in multiple regions along the border and focus on the issues and projects specifically related to that region. This allows for much more in-depth discussion, prioritization of issues and projects, and strategy development to address them.

The IBWC capitalized on the opportunity of having its leadership in the area and decided to also hold a binational stakeholders meeting on the same day.

Federal, state, and local agencies from both countries were invited to present on topics ranging from water quality to transboundary flows, discussing possible solutions in a collaborative atmosphere.

The tone of the meeting was cordial but serious, as many of the items discussed have been long-term topics of interest in the region.