

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. President:

We need your immediate help. Under the 1944 Water Treaty, Mexico has failed to deliver sufficient water, endangering potable water supplies for up to 800,000 people in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Without additional water, several irrigation districts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas may no longer be able to convey municipal water. We have attached 18 resolutions from local government entities expressing their grave concern, and we receive more resolutions each week. Neither the U.S. Department of State nor the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) has been able to resolve this matter, and our U.S. cities and farmers in South Texas are running out of time.

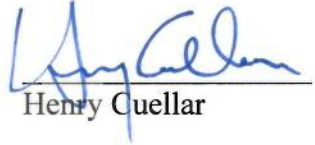
While we appreciate that many meetings with the Mexicans have occurred and that a very small amount of water has been released, we understand that they have not yet presented a concrete plan to address the deficit. Without a plan and actual compliance by Mexico, our communities in the Rio Grande Valley still face the real possibility of significantly increased costs and difficulty in conveying water to our municipalities.

Under the 1944 Water Treaty, Mexico can only withhold water when it is in extraordinary drought. Based on information prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Mexico is not in extreme drought. (See attached.) According to their data, Mexico's portion of the Rio Grande basin subject to treaty deliveries has been free of extreme drought conditions since May 2012. Yet, it is during these same months that Mexico's deliveries to the Rio Grande have been among the lowest in this cycle and well below the required minimum 350,000 acre feet per year on average. As you can see, the United States is in extreme drought, but Mexico is not. On at least 17 occasions, our nation has responded to Mexico's request for water solutions above and beyond our 1944 Water Treaty obligations. Further, while our nation continues to make its annual water payments to Mexico, U.S. communities who depend on water from Mexico cannot afford to wait any longer to receive the water they are entitled to under the treaty.

We respectfully request you take immediate action to ensure deliveries of Rio Grande water that will give Texas border communities the water they need and that they are owed. If sufficient water is not flowing by early May when you travel to Mexico to meet with President Enrique Peña Nieto, we urge you to raise this issue directly with him.

Mr. President, your personal attention to this matter is critical, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Filemon Vela
Rubén Hinojosa
Henry Cuellar
Pete Gallego
Beto O'Rourke