



## Mexico's 30yr Failure to Reliably Delivery Water to So. Texas & What Can Be Done

The U.S. & Mexico share the water of the Rio Grande River under the "1944 Treaty for the Utilization of waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande." MX has not honored its commitments under the Treaty to make annual water deliveries to the U.S. since 1992, and over the last 30+ years regularly defaults on the annual, 5-year and 10-year cycle deliveries. MX's failure to deliver is not due to a lack of water, but rather a conscious effort

by the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Coahuila to keep the water in the 11 reservoirs located in those states.

The Treaty allots to the U.S. one-third of the tributary inflow into the Rio Grande (with the other 2/3 going to other states in Mexico) above the international reservoirs, and this one-third shall not be less than 350,000-acre feet as an annual average delivery over a cycle of 5 consecutive years. The only exception to making an annual delivery of this water is if the region is experiencing extraordinary drought or serious accident to the hydraulic systems of the reservoirs. The accumulation of over 2.96-million-acre feet of water in the MX tributaries named in the Treaty since August 2022 is a clear indication the region is not in an extraordinary drought nor are there reports of any accidents to those hydraulic systems. As of April 2024, in year 4 of the current 5-year cycle, MX is in arrears of 811,300-acre feet of water to the U.S.

The water resources available to the 1 million people living in South Texas are at 22% of capacity. 19% capacity is considered "critical level" as the combination of use and summer temperatures cause a 1% weekly decrease. Since August 2023, more than 15 water districts and cities have announced water restrictions. **4 irrigation districts have stopped water to farmers, cutting off nearly 200,000 acres.**

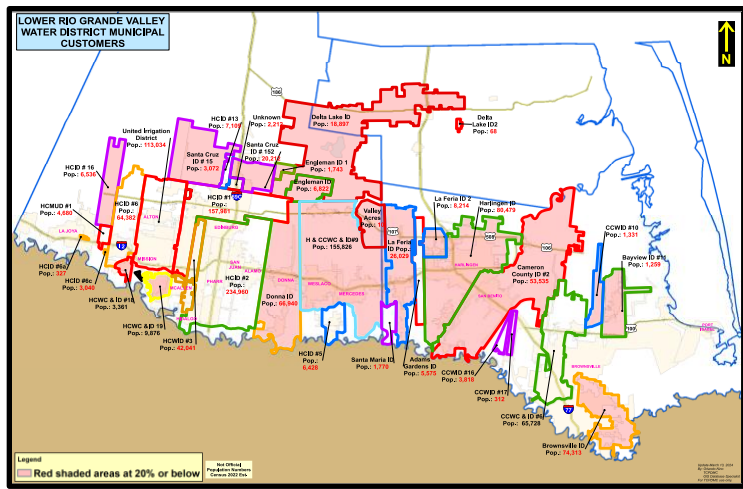
**The lack of compliance is severely impacting the survival of agriculture in South Texas and threatens the availability of water for non-agricultural uses as well.**

**In February 2024, the last sugar mill in Texas closed its doors after 51yrs causing nearly 500 people to lose their jobs, destroying a 40,000ac industry, forcing the remaining farmers growing sugar cane to plow the crop into the dirt as a direct result of lack of water.** Thousands of employees who work in the fields, packing sheds, shipping facilities, mills, and administrative positions as well as vendors and small businesses that depend on the production of fresh produce and other crops will go without work. The trucking companies and barges, along with the suppliers of boxes, pallets, packing materials, and everything else that goes into getting the fresh produce from the field to the store are suffering.



As a result, the impacts on farmers, residents, and consumers are and will continue to be severe. According to a 2023 study by Texas A&M’s Center for North American Studies (CNAS), without this water the subsequent loss of irrigated crops in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (RGV) would amount to: \$993.2 million in lost economic output, another \$554.7 million in lost GDP to the state, plus 8,404 jobs would be lost in the process.

How bad is the situation for fruit and veggie farmers in the RGV currently?



- Vegetable seed sales are down 30%.
- Vegetable and fruit plantings are down 25-100%, depending on the commodity.
  - 70% of the state's total fresh produce comes from the Rio Grande Valley.
- Citrus and other 'permanent' crops (i.e. trees & bushes) require watering to produce commercial yields. This year, many of those crops may only be watered enough to keep them alive but it may not be enough to produce commercial yields.
  - Citrus has 3300 acres in water districts that are currently out of water, resulting in a million-carton loss, estimated at \$25 million.
  - Losses noted above do not include the following season’s losses w/ early estimates showing half a billion in sales losses not including tree losses if the drought continues or there is no available irrigation.

**Residents in the area will soon feel the pain of no water in their daily lives as well.** Many rural communities rely on water being delivered to agriculture in order to receive water into their distribution systems (a process known as “push water” which moves large amounts of water through canals and similar systems to other locales). **Those communities are largely minority, mostly Hispanic, and have a higher-than-average percentage of residents living at or below the poverty line.** Without the water for agriculture to move residential water, those citizens will soon have no water either.

We greatly appreciate all the work done by Members in the Senate and the House to get us to this point, however, Mexico has still not delivered water to the U.S. We ask for the following:

- **The Administration must engage with Mexico NOW to secure immediate water releases.**
- **Congress should direct the U.S. State Department to identify and report to Congress the current barriers to enforcing the 1944 Treaty with the spirit and interpretation that annual payments of 350,000ac/ft must be made, with any deficit reconciled at the end of the 5-year cycle.**

**We ask you to immediately engage with Mexico to get all of the water owed for this current cycle and to make ensuring reliable annual water payments a priority. The residents of South Texas are counting on our elected officials to take this situation seriously before even more damage is done. Only the U.S. government can enforce a treaty. We must have your support.**

