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3-25-1992

News Release - 1992-03-25b

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news release

DE LA GARZA PROPOSES STEPPED-UP U.S.-MEXICO EFFORT TO MONITOR RIO GRANDE POLLUTION

For immediate release, Wednesday, March 25, 1992

WASHINGTON -- Rep. E (Kika) de la Garza, D-Texas, is urging U.S. members of a binational panel that coordinates Rio Grande water issues to develop a U.S.-Mexico agreement for more closely monitoring water pollution problems.

In a letter to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), Rep. de la Garza proposed that the panel develop a permanent and binationally-accepted comprehensive data base to track water pollution and industrial waste discharge problems in the Rio Grande and the river's contribution to pollution problems in the Gulf of Mexico.

"It is increasingly evident that a broader and more intensive monitoring effort is needed for the IBWC to adequately assess the impact of the increased growth of population and industrialization of the region and the potential discharge of toxic materials and pesticides into the river," Rep. de la Garza said.

With a permanent data base, the IBWC could help provide a basis for addressing the growing water quality problems facing the border region, Rep. de la Garza said. "It would also help the region prevent new problems associated with anticipated growth under the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement," he said.

If the IBWC endorses the idea of a water quality monitoring agreement, Rep. de la Garza pledged to work with the appropriate congressional committees to secure financing for the U.S. contribution to the project.

"The waters of the Rio Grande provide a domestic supply to nearly 1.6 million inhabitants in the lower Rio Grande communities in both countries. These waters also provide irrigation to some 1.7 million acres of farmland in the area. It would be extremely beneficial to the region for the IBWC to enter into a jointly-financed U.S.-Mexico Rio Grande water quality monitoring agreement to improve the quality of life for all the people who live and work in the Lower Rio Grande Valley," Rep. de la Garza said.

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