

On Behalf of Lower Rio Grande Valley Citrus Growers:

In response to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative's request for comments published on September 16, 2025, regarding the Joint Review of the USMCA (Docket No. USTR-2025-XXXX), and on behalf of [**Texas Citrus Growers**], whose survival depends on the enforcement of our trade and treaty agreements, particularly the Treaty of February 3, 1944. Water Treaty for the "Utilization of waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande" and specifically Mexico's obligation for water deliveries of waters in the international segment of the Rio Grande from Fort Quitman, Texas, to the Gulf of Mexico., we submit the following comments for consideration.

Mexico has failed to deliver water to the U.S. in accordance with the 1944 Treaty on an annual basis, to the detriment of U.S. growers and communities. As a direct result of this conduct, Rio Grande Valley agriculture has been negatively affected, with significant reductions in production acres resulting in severe economic losses. Not only are those losses felt by the farmers, but also at each step of the production chain.

For the Citrus industry, trees are generational investments that cannot be fallowed and replanted like annual crops. The Texas citrus industry, which has a statewide economic impact of over \$300 million, is on the brink of disaster.¹ Mexico's failure to deliver water to the United States means that even if we receive an average annual rainfall, our trees will only receive half the irrigation they need to survive, let alone produce fruit.² This chronic stress, combined with recent freezes, has crippled our ability to recover, with production tonnage down 25 percent for some growers.³ As our members have stated, "You can't turn the orchards on and off."⁴ Without a reliable water supply, our trees will die. As the President of Texas Citrus Mutual, Dale Murden, has warned, "Without immediate action and support, the citrus industry in South Texas is at risk of significant economic losses, affecting not only the growers but also the entire supply chain and local communities."⁵

Mexico must be held accountable to uphold its Treaty obligation, which is to provide predictable, annual water deliveries for the beneficial use of U.S. water users. Unfortunately, the Treaty does not include enforcement or dispute mechanism processes. We respectfully request that the U.S. government consider including the 1944 Water Treaty in the USMCA process to provide stakeholders and government officials with jurisdiction of Treaty enforcement, a tool to ensure Mexico complies with the Treaty.

¹ Berenice Garcia, *Texas' citrus industry — once an agricultural powerhouse — is on the brink of disaster*, Tex. Trib. (Dec. 19, 2024). <https://www.texastribune.org/2024/12/19/texas-citrus-industry-water/>

² *Id.* (noting that a mature citrus tree requires 40-50 inches of water per year, while average rainfall is only about 20 inches, meaning half must come from irrigation).

³ *Id.* (stating that Lone Star Citrus Growers is producing at about 75% of its typical crop size in terms of tonnage).

⁴ Emmy Powell, *Study examines economic impacts in LRGV due to water shortages*, Tex. Farm Bureau (Feb. 2024). <https://texasfarmbureau.org/study-examines-economic-impacts-in-lrgv-due-to-water-shortages/>

⁵ Dale Murden, President, Tex. Citrus Mutual, *Texas Citrus Mutual Addresses Critical Water Issues in South Texas*, Morning Ag Clips (last visited Sep. 27, 2025). <https://www.morningagclips.com/texas-citrus-mutual-addresses-critical-water-issues-in-south-texas/>