

MEXICAN WATERS FREE FROM TOXICS

Why does the river roar?

In 2003, the National Water Commission (CONAGUA) reported that 73% of Mexican water bodies had some degree of pollution.¹

In 2011, the Environment Ministry (SEMARNAT) said that the standard regulating wastewater discharge, the NOM-001-SEMARNAT-1996, has “zero effect” and that “it is not enforced, which represents the unrestricted discharge of contaminants.”

The National Water Commission estimates that industrial sources discharge an organic load equivalent to that generated by **300 million of people** that is 2.5 times the national population.

Levels of inspection are also very low. It is calculated that it would take CONAGUA **61 years** to inspect the total number user with a discharge permit or water concession.⁴

Why do we need a better discharge standard?

The current standard only regulates 20 parameters, leaving a wide range of synthetic substances unregulated, particularly those of industrial origin.

Who can change the discharge standard?

The National Consulting Committee on Standardization of Environmental and Natural Resources, **COMARNAT**, which is chaired by the Environment Ministry (SEMARNAT).

The standard **hasn't been modified since 1996**.

Almost half of the members of COMARNAT are industry chambers and associations.

The risk here is that **private profit may be favored** over protection of the environment and the health of the population.

Why doesn't the current standard work?

Insufficient parameters and lax limits.

An industrial sector empowered to make decisions on the new standard.

Extremely low levels of inspection.

Modification at a standstill in the Environment Ministry (SEMARNAT).

How can I participate?

Join the campaign:


 @Elriosuena_mx
 @ElRioSuenaMexicosinToxicos
www.conoceasanti.org

Participate in actions calling for **better standards**, strengthened inspections and monitoring of discharges, and for an **end to the dumping of toxic substances** by the industrial sector.

1. CONAGUA. (2003). *Estadísticas del agua en México 2003*. México: CONAGUA.

2. SEMARNAT. (2011). *Evaluación de instrumentos normativos del sector ambiental*. México: SEMARNAT.

3. Medida en términos de la carga de demanda bioquímica de oxígeno a 5 días (DBO5). CONAGUA. (2014). Programa Nacional Hídrico 2013-2018. México: SEMARNAT.

4. McCulligh, Cindy. (2016). "Poder y contaminación: corrupción institucionalizada y la contaminación industrial del río Santiago en Jalisco, México", en McCulligh, C., Santana, L., y Lezama, C. (Eds.), *Las políticas del deterioro: la dinámica urbano-industrial en torno al río Santiago, Jalisco, México*. Cuadernos de Trabajo de la Red WATERLAT-GOBACIT, Vol. 3, No. 6: 60-94. Disponible en: <http://waterlat.org/WPapers/WPSATCUASPE36.pdf>.