

**United States-Mexico Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Act Summary**  
**S. 1957 - Jeff Bingaman, Sponsor**

The U.S.-Mexico Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Act is intended to address the lack of binational consensus regarding the source and availability of future water supplies along the border. There are a number of aquifers shared by the U.S. and Mexico which are heavily relied upon by many communities in the border region. Continued use of those aquifers, and avoidance of the types of conflicts that have involved shared surface water resources, depends on a common scientific understanding of these shared groundwater resources. This bill, as summarized below, will establish a binational scientific program to comprehensively assess priority transboundary aquifers. The information and scientific tools developed by this program will be extremely valuable to state and local water resource managers in the border region.

**Section 1.– Short Title**

Designates the Act the "United States-Mexico Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Act".

**Section 2.– Findings & Purpose**

Describes several findings that establish the basis for the bill and sets forth its general purpose.

**Section 3.– Definitions**

Defines terms used in the Act.

**Section 4.– Establishment of Program**

(a) Directs the Secretary of the Interior, through USGS, to carry out a U.S.-Mexico transboundary aquifer assessment program that characterizes, maps, and models priority aquifers along the border. The program is to be implemented in cooperation and consultation with the Border States and other entities.

(b) Identifies the objectives of the program as (1) developing and implementing an integrated scientific approach to assess transboundary groundwater resources; (2) utilizing and expanding agreements with entities in the United States and Mexico to carry out the program; and (3) producing scientific products that provide relevant information and management tools needed by state and local water resource managers.

(c) Specifies that the Hueco Bolson and Mesilla aquifers underlying parts of Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico shall be studied as part of the program.

(d) Directs the Secretary to work with Mexico to the extent practicable in carrying out the program.

(e) Authorizes the Secretary to provide grants or enter into agreements to carrying out the program.

**Section 5.– State and Tribal Role**

(a) Requires the Secretary to coordinate the program with Border States and affected Indian tribes.

(b) Requires the Secretary to consult and coordinate with the relevant border state water resource agency on any new field studies or the development of new groundwater models as part of the program.

**Section 6.– Authorization of Appropriations**

(a) Authorizes a total of \$50 million for fiscal years 2005-2014 to carry out the program.

(b) Directs that 50% of the available funding be provided to the Water Resource Research Institutes within the Border States for distribution consistent with the program's purposes.

**Section 7.– Reports**

Requires the Secretary to prepare an interim and final report on implementation of the program.

For the full text of the bill