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Language
English

In the midst of the water crisis facing the Panama Canal, a quick survey by Elemente, of the Economic Activity of January 2024, revealed that most of the companies in the country agree with the development of the river reservoir project Indio to alleviate the current situation of the interoceanic waterway.

221 companies from different economic activities participated in the measurement: commercial (41), tourism (19), industry (19) and professional services (18), which were asked the following: in relation to the situation of water for consumption human and operation of the Panama Canal, do you agree with the development of the reservoir on the Indio River? As a result, it was found that of 221 participating companies, 86% said they agreed with the development of the Indio River reservoir project, 2% disagreed and 12% were unaware of the issue.

Indian River Project Details

According to the survey, the Indio River project is part of the solution to a water management problem, both for human and industrial consumption and for the operation of the Panama Canal. He specified that the project consists of building a water reservoir of about 4,400 hectares, 10% of the surface of the Gatún reservoir, and would connect both through a transfer tunnel of approximately 9 kilometers.

According to the measurement, the development of the project may affect about 2,000 people who live in the area and the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) is already working in the area on this. "Río Indio is the most profitable alternative" in the face of the water crisis facing the Canal, the administrator of the Panama Canal, Ricaurte Vásquez, has reiterated on several occasions. But he also insisted that to develop the project it is necessary to eliminate the restriction on the construction of new reservoirs and to define the boundaries of the basin.

Next steps

In a conversation with journalists on January 17, Vásquez recalled that these proposals had already been presented by the ACP board of directors to the Executive Branch, but the government has not yet expressed a definitive position on the matter. The decision must first go through the Cabinet Council and then through the National Assembly.

Vásquez also assured that if the proposal is achieved, the project would be carried out in strict compliance with the laws that protect human and family rights, vulnerable people and those who own property in these areas. In addition, international reference performance standards would be respected for the application of best practices throughout the process.

According to a publication by the Voice of America, building the reservoir on the Indio River has an approximate cost of \$900 million. The project would last between four and six years and would include the social plan, construction and filling of the reservoir. The Canal is developing the terms of reference for its tender. In the event that it is up to the Canal to build a reservoir on the Indio River, Vásquez assured that they have the resources to do so.

Fecha:

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Autor(es):

MundoMaritimo

Tomado de:

<https://www.mundomaritimo.cl/noticias/por-crisis-hidrica-en-el-canal-de-panama-86-de-los-empresarios-esta-de-acuerdo-con-el-proyecto-embalse-de-rio-indio>

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