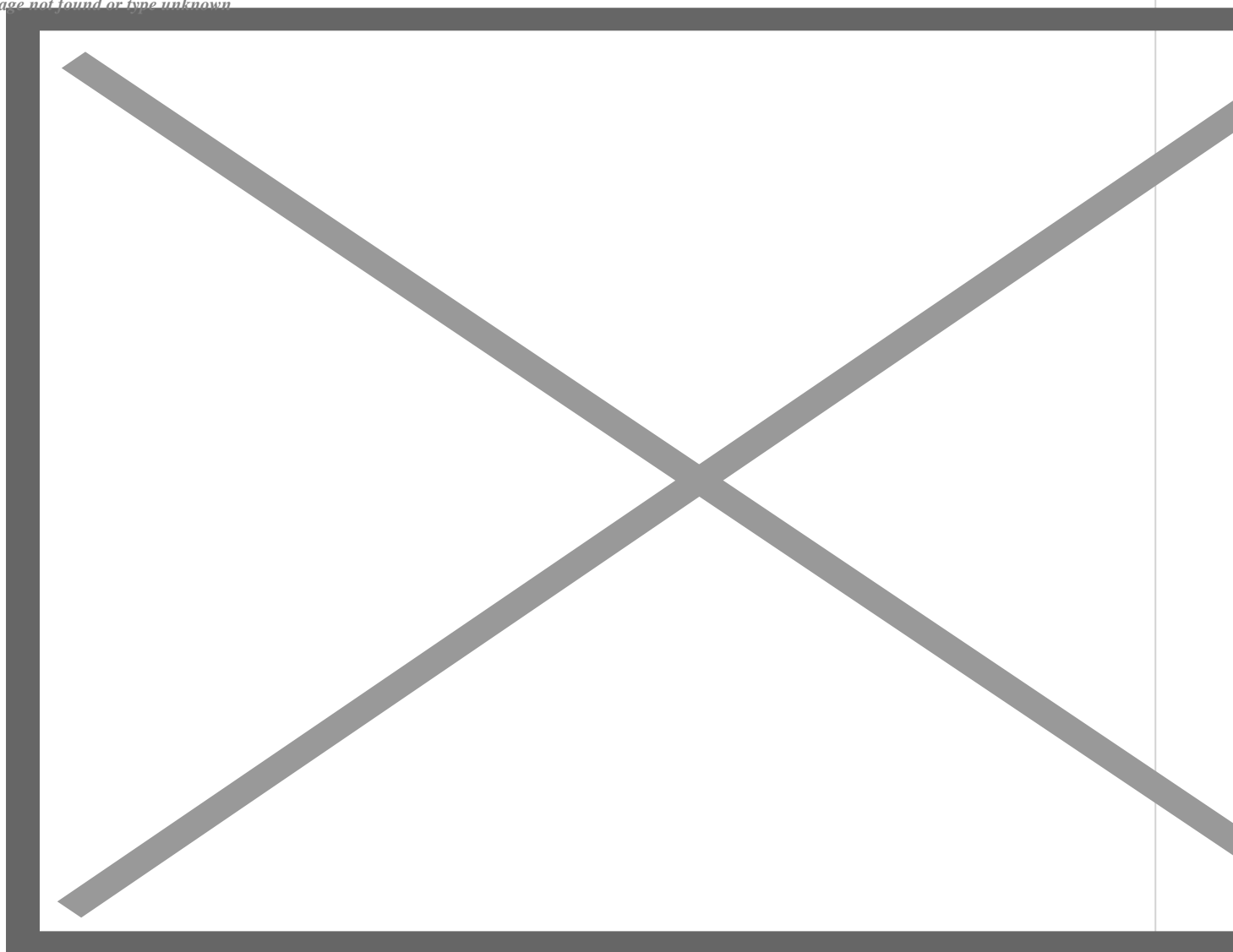


# *Keeping an eye on environmental impact*

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**In view of the large-scale fire at the supertanker base in the western city of Matanzas, Cuban authorities are closely monitoring the environmental conditions to preserve the health of the citizens and to know its impact on biodiversity.**

By María Josefina Arce.

In view of the large-scale fire at the supertanker base in the western city of Matanzas, Cuban authorities are closely monitoring the environmental conditions to preserve the health of the citizens and to know its impact on biodiversity.

In the constant meetings to evaluate the situation and adopt strategies, Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel has reiterated the importance of not neglecting the surveillance of possible environmental damages that represent a risk for the integrity of people and the environment.

Thus, work is coordinated and intensively carried out between the various ministries such as CITMA, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, and entities such as the Institute of Meteorology, always attentive to atmospheric variables.

The quality of the air, water and soil is monitored and the population is informed in detail to avoid health problems. This constant monitoring is not limited to Matanzas, but also extends to the nearby provinces of Mayabeque, Artemisa and Havana, given the smoke that is carried by the wind.

In fact, from the very first moment, the competent authorities have advised the use of masks, due to the intense smoke derived from the fire.

So far, experts have stressed, there are no reports of an increase in respiratory diseases in the west of the country as a result of polluting gas emissions, because the concentrations are less significant on the surface.

This is an important aspect on which constant communication is maintained with the Ministry of Public Health and the different hospital facilities.

The quality of the water for human consumption is another concern of the experts, who remain alert to any possible contamination. For the citizens' peace of mind, given some rumors, it has been reported that the precious liquid is optimal.

In this regard, it has been clarified that the well field from which the aqueduct is supplied is far from the area of the incident. It has been emphasized that the water extracted is constantly chlorinated and its quality is verified at the outlet of the Distribution Center.

One of the recommendations of the specialists to the residents is that they should not expose themselves to the rains associated with the whole area under the influence of the smoke plume, especially vulnerable people such as children, the elderly and the chronically ill.

The fire in the western city of Matanzas has also meant a challenge because of the possible effects on the health of the citizens, which is why the authorities have not ceased at any time to pay specific attention to this aspect.

There are many people involved in the care of the population. They have worked and continue to work tirelessly to minimize the risks, since life and health preservation have always been a maxim of the Cuban authorities, who are also seriously committed to the protection of the environment.

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