



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

Ms. Octaviana Trujillo, Ph.D., Chair
U.S. Governmental Advisory Committee
2693 North Sandstone Way
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

FEB 27 2013

Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Dear Dr. Trujillo:

On behalf of Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, I would like to thank you for the Governmental Advisory Committee's (GAC) advice of December 16, 2012 reporting on its October 25-26, 2012 meeting in Washington D.C. Your letter provides valuable recommendations to the United States Government on the Commission on Environmental Cooperation's (CEC) cooperative work plan for 2013, the strategic focus and direction for new projects, and the communications efforts to promote CEC activity. I was sorry that I could not join you in person, but am pleased that Michael Stahl, the Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, was able to join you in my stead.

We appreciate your advice regarding the strategic projects to be included in the new operational plan, particularly that would address issues related to greening the economy and climate change-low carbon economies. As we discussed in the October meeting, the Council has supported a vision of the CEC more focused on fewer and bigger projects that give North America a greater bang for the environmental buck. We will work with you to make sure that this transition to "fewer, bigger" is done in a thoughtful manner which will support targeted activities with more tangible results.

We also appreciate your advice and recommendations on the communication strategy. Your recommendations on outreach tools and relevant organizations will be very helpful in strengthening our messages and broadening our stakeholders.

As always, your guidance is highly valuable and respected. Finally, I would like to personally congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Government Advisory Committee. I look forward to discussing these ideas with you in more detail and look forward to seeing you at your spring meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle DePass".

Michelle DePass
Alternate Representative for the United States

Recommendations:

General:

That all CEC projects incorporate performance measures and outcomes

Currently, all projects under the CEC cooperative work plan incorporate a variety of performance measures all geared toward achieving the stated outcomes of each individual project. Because of the breadth in the spectrum of projects, there is variance in the specificity and degree to which performance measures can be applied. Some projects can be easily subjected to quantitative measures and others require a qualitative approach. Regardless of the project type, we agree that there should be increased focus on the performance measures of each active project and that each project should strive for clear and achievable outcomes.

That serious consideration should be given to scaling back the number of projects, as to make them more strategic and focused

Thank you for your advice regarding scaling back the number of projects in the annual work plan. The Council has considered this issue and agrees that stronger results will come from more focused and concerted action. It is our intention that future work programs will limit projects and programs and that Council will ensure that the focus is on those critical matters on which the CEC can make a real difference. At this time we are in the process of making determinations on what projects will be undertaken in the 2013-14 Operational Plan, and will of course, provide you with an opportunity to comment on any new scenario.

Moving North American Grasslands project to the climate change pillar

We appreciate the suggestion to re-align the North American Grasslands project under the climate change priority. The categorization of CEC projects are usually done by the government experts in each country involved with the project, but we recognize that many of our activities could fall under the auspices of more than one of the priority, given the need to provide sufficiently broad focus for our work. At the same time in developing the CEC cooperative work plan, we endeavor to provide a balance of activities across the three broad strategic priorities. We will propose this change to our counterparts in Mexico and Canada, and report back to you as soon as such a trilateral discussion takes place.

Potential "sun-setting" of the automotive supply project, due to its success; can be used as a model for best practices

We agree that the automotive supply project has been a tremendous success and has largely achieved its objective of establishing a functioning partnership among manufacturers in all three countries. We further agree that this project should sunset at the close of the 2011-2012 operational cycle. In anticipation of the project close, we are actively working with our representatives to this project to determine how this model could be applied to other asset classes, such as shipping or freight, and how we can share applicable best practices with other CEC projects.

***New potential project:** "Assessment of environmental impacts of solid waste practices in rural and indigenous communities"*

Overall Framework for this project would include:

Inventory of current solid waste management practices

Identify gaps and barriers to adequate solid waste management practices

Identify tools and best practices

Thank you for your suggestion and sound advice on considering a new project related to solid waste practices in rural and indigenous communities. You have raised important issues regarding the impact of inadequate management and disposal of solid waste on our "at risk" communities. We will work with our experts in EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response to determine the feasibility of such an activity, and we will discuss it with our counterparts in Canada and Mexico as well.

Communication RECOMMENDATION:

Develop an e-newsletter with a "news" section on Council, JPAC, NAC and GAC, and any other relevant groups; plus a calendar section, and highlights on successes or accomplishments, and relevant web links.

Below are potential national venues where the GAC could be a megaphone:

We agree with the GAC about the utility and importance of all available media to raising awareness on trade and environmental issues and we are encouraged by the willingness of the GAC to promote the work being done through the CEC. We have encouraging news that the communication efforts made at 2012 CEC Council Session had a significant impact and greatly improved organizational outreach. At the 2012 council session, there were double the number of individuals logged in following the public portions than in 2011, Twitter activity was at an all-time high for CEC, and in-person attendance at both the JPAC and the public council sessions were marked improvements over previous years. The CEC has also taken a more aggressive approach to communicating the activities of each project in the current operational cycle. Each project has its own set of web pages and also disseminates separate blasts, posts and tweets that are developed and sent out for project activity, secretarial reports, administrative/leadership changes, and mention of other bi-lateral and tri-lateral activity. The EPA will continue to encourage a broadening of stakeholder lists and outreach and your list of relevant organizations is an excellent start in this effort. The EPA will also encourage further use of social media tools and suggest the development of targeted messages specific to each project, including creating an option for subscribers to select projects about which they want to receive updates and information.

As for the development of an e-newsletter, we will work with CEC to determine the feasibility of an over-arching newsletter and whether there is a more effective way to promote current news from the CEC. We encourage GAC members to use their national venues to share news and information from the CEC, and we will continue to work with GAC to ensure you are up to date on the latest news and information to share.