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**U.S. National Advisory Committee**  
*Independent Federal Advisors on the  
North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation*

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October 20, 2017

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The Honorable Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) to the U.S. Representative to the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) held its forty-ninth meeting in Washington, D.C. on September 14-15, 2017.

Each meeting of the NAC is structured to ensure the committee can provide advice as requested in the *Charge Questions* to the committee for that meeting. Our September 2017 meeting was therefore structured specifically to provide members with the time necessary to engage with each other and EPA to provide feedback on how the Council can engage States, tribal nations and the private sector in North America to share their experiences advancing green growth, North American trade and environmental protection; and which exemplary activities and best practices being carried out by States, tribal nations and the private sector focused on advancing green growth could be highlighted at the 2018 Council Session.

The meeting began with an update on “U.S. Priorities and Guidance” by Jane Nishida, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) at EPA. Ms. Nishida’s update included: 1) results from the CEC Council Session in Canada, 2) plans for the 2018 CEC Council Session and 3) update on NAFTA negotiations. She also requested advice in developing the 2018 Youth Innovation Challenge on the theme of green growth. Next, Ms. Felicia Wright, Acting Director for the American Indian Environmental Office, in OITA, EPA, provided an update on upcoming activities and initiatives with Tribal Nations. Subsequently, we had a morning committee working session to discuss criteria for identifying exemplary green growth projects.

The afternoon session began with an update by César Rafael Chávez, Executive Director of the CEC Secretariat on the programmatic progress under the Operation Plan and the current round of NAPECA grants. Mr. Chavez also presented the JPAC update, on behalf of JPAC Chair, Bob Varney, on recent JPAC activities since the March 2017 update. Some of the highlights included JPAC advice to Council on: 1) advancing sustainable clean energy in North America, 2) reducing and managing food and organic waste streams

Simone Sagovac  
*Michigan*

Ivonne Santiago  
*Texas*

in North America, 3) environmental considerations in the further elaboration of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation in the event of a further elaboration of the NAFTA, and 4) increasing resilience through cooperation: empowering coastal, shoreline, and riverbank communities in North America. We also received an excellent overview and analysis of Article 14-15 submissions to date by Robert Moyer, SEM Director at the CEC.

The NAC wishes to express its appreciation to the EPA for their commitment to citizen engagement in the important work of the CEC. The NAC also wishes to express appreciation for the excellent support provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Management Division (FACMD) and thank Director Monisha Harris, NAC/GAC Designated Federal Officer Oscar Carrillo, and all of the FACMD staff for their support, before, during and after the meeting.

Sincerely,



Theresa A. Pardo, Ph.D., Chair  
National Advisory Committee

cc: Jane Nishida, Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs  
Monisha Harris, Director, Federal Advisory Committee Management Division (FACMD)  
Oscar Carrillo, Designated Federal Officer, FACMD  
Mark Kasman, Director, Office of Regional & Bilateral Affairs, OITA, EPA  
Luis Troche, Senior Advisor, North American Affairs, OITA, EPA  
Robert Varney, Chair, Joint Public Advisory Committee  
César Rafael Chávez, Executive Director, CEC  
Members of the U.S. National and Governmental Advisory Committees

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National Advisory Committee (NAC)  
To the U.S. Representative to the  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

**Advice 2017-4: Engaging Stakeholders**  
*(Meeting – September 14-15, 2017)*

The Charge for the September 2017 meeting was presented in two parts:

1. **Engaging Stakeholders.** Provide advice on how the Council can engage States, tribal nations and the private sector in North America to share their experiences advancing green growth, North American trade and environmental protection; and
2. **Exemplary Activities and Best Practices for Inclusion at the 2018 Council Session.** Identify which exemplary activities and best practices being carried out by States, tribal nations and the private sector focused on advancing green growth could be highlighted at the 2018 Council Session.

Each of the two parts of the Charge Question was addressed and additional advice was discussed; all three are presented below. In addition, NAC and GAC worked together to compile feedback in the form of a memorandum for the EPA on the Youth Innovation Challenge for use by Ms. Nishida and Mr. Troche during the October “alt rep” meeting. A draft of this memorandum is included as well.

**Engaging Stakeholders.**

The Members of the National Advisory Committee (NAC) discussed a variety of ways the Council could further engage stakeholders such as States, tribal nations and the private sector to share their experiences advancing green growth, North American trade and environmental protection. The list of recommended actions to consider (in no priority order) is listed below:

1. Engage key stakeholders in specific activities in the Council. Identify stakeholders of greatest interest to the Council and reach out to them specifically. Sharpen the invitations to these specific stakeholders and help individual or individual entities see the value to them and to their organizations. Have a clear benefit statement for key stakeholders to participate. Don't water down the statement by trying to make it fit for all stakeholders.
2. Develop an elevator pitch, record it on video and put it on the website so people can see it and others can refer to it. Establish an outreach mechanism such as a blog or a bulletin board. Use it to be inclusive and enable knowledge exchange. Build awareness of what CEC does; go back to the basics.
3. Help build the green growth constituency. Feature key stakeholders at a council session. Amplify their awards and accomplishments. Showcase their contributions that align with the CEC priorities.
4. Look at good engagement models and identify good ideas that could be used by CEC. For example, the Flame Challenge which provides a model for engaging youth.
5. Use Social Media in new ways to highlight the value of CEC programs and initiatives and to generate interest. Use CEC Social Media to highlight how others help advance the CEC priorities. Generate awareness by amplifying the success of others.
6. With respect to the 2018 Council Session:

- a. Use the presence of the Administrator to generate interest and participation. Leverage this opportunity to build participation in the 2018 session and overall awareness and engagement beyond the 2018 session.
  - b. Engage Region 6 in securing the participation of key regional stakeholders.
  - c. Add another day to the Council Session with opportunity to meet with Administrator Pruitt, possibly with a NAFTA focus.
  - d. Identify where the green growth jobs are regionally and nationally and to encourage and incentivize those companies to come to the Session.
  - e. Add capacity building opportunities as an integral part of the Council Sessions. If capacity building sessions are offered, NACC members agreed, foundations and others may be more able and willing to support travel expenses for civil society participants and community leaders.
  - f. Provide travel grants to civil society for their attendance at the CEC Council Sessions.
  - g. Focus activities at the CEC Council Session programmatically, to foster sharing of knowledge and experiences on green growth among tribal nations and local governments.
  - h. Host a set of sessions or activities on green growth and recent natural disasters – in particular Harvey and Irma. Address the need to keep green growth into emergency response and disaster recovery.
7. Work with EPA Liaisons in new ways to build knowledge sharing networks and awareness of CEC Programs and opportunities.
- a. Build awareness of the CEC among EPA Liaisons to state, local and tribal communities.
  - b. Identify those individuals at the EPA who serve as liaisons to communities such as those focused on wetlands or other relevant priorities via state associations (e.g., ECOS, AAHSTO) or professional associations (e.g., ASWM). Reach out to those people and build their awareness of the CEC and the Council Session. Leverage the roles these people play and the networks they have to build awareness and engagement.

National Advisory Committee (NAC)  
To the U.S. Representative to the  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

**Advice 2017-5: Exemplary Activities and Best Practices for  
Inclusion at the 2018 Council Session**

*(Meeting – September 14-15, 2017)*

To prepare for responding to the second part of the September 2017 Charge Questions, the Chairs of the NAC and GAC agreed to do a joint call for nomination of initiatives for consideration by the NAC and GAC at the September 2017 meeting. Nominations were collected by the Chairs and redistributed to the members prior to the meetings. Additional nominations were presented for consideration during the meeting as well.

Table 1. Exemplary Activities and Best Practices for Possible Inclusion in the 2018 CEC Council Session Criteria Developed by NAC for Reviewing Nominated Initiatives	
Community Focused	Project’s approach, activities and results have a primary impact in the community in which it is executed.
Bottom up	Project is initiated, operated and sustained by stakeholders that are directly affected by it
Sustainable Politically	Project is able to survive changes in political leadership
Clear Community Benefits	Positive impact resulting from project has quantifiable benefits to the affected community
Measurable, Clear Objectives	Objectives are clearly defined and easily understood. Measuring objective attainment is possible
Measurable results	Project results are readily measurable, measurement periods are reasonable, metric has an appropriate level of sensitivity
Replicable, Scalable, Adaptable	Project can be scaled up or down, and is implementable in other communities. Operating model has a moderate to high degree of adaptability
Sustainable	Project can be sustained on its own merits, even when initial champion(s) are no longer active
Green growth	Project provides a path of economic growth that uses natural resources in a sustainable manner and provides an alternative concept to typical industrial economic growth
Job Focus	Project has a positive impact on generating /increasing/sustaining jobs
Environmental Impact	Project has a clear, positive impact on the environmental issue that it is focused on. No significant unintended negative impacts
Affordable	Project is not dependent on large dollar amounts/large capital investments to start and operated

The following process was used by the NAC in reviewing and selecting from among the nominated initiatives:

1. The NAC first brainstormed and then refined and agreed upon a set of criteria for selecting exemplary activities and best practices as shown in Table 1.
2. The NAC then reviewed a number of initiatives to become familiar with the details of each. In some cases, the NAC members simply reviewed materials provided in support of a proposal in other cases; NAC members presented lightning talks of nominations. Each lightning talk was allowed three minutes with additional time for questions.
3. In the reviewing process, the NAC agreed to further collapse the criteria into three higher level criteria as follows:
  - Economic and Environmental Green Growth Impact.
    - *This criterion was considered the threshold criterion. If the project did not clearly meet this criterion it was not considered further in terms of exemplary activity or best practice.*
  - Clear objectives and measurable outcomes.
  - Replicable, sustainable, scalable and adaptable.
4. Through open discussion NAC used the criteria to systematically assess each nominated initiative. The NAC wishes to remind the EPA that the level of analysis undertaken in each case was limited due to time available and access to supporting materials. Having said that, the NAC members applied their considerable expertise and experience in compiling the group of nominated initiatives, in developing the criteria and the process for using the criteria to those nominees. The assessment process resulted in the sorting of the nominated initiatives into three categories as follows:
  - a. Those nominations considered “Exemplary Activities or Best Practices” in terms of the criteria developed by the members of the NAC and should be considered for invitations to the CEC Session in 2018.
  - b. Those nominations considered as meeting the threshold criterion but considered weaker in one or more of the key areas. Such initiatives were considered on balance interesting and unique and therefore, regardless of some of the perceived weaknesses, should be considered for invitations to the CEC Session in 2018.
  - c. Those nominations considered representing a class of initiatives that the NAC recommends are considered for invitation to the CEC Council Session in 2018, but which no specific recommendation for the inclusion of the nominated initiatives is being put forward. These initiatives, while not rising to the level of exemplary or best practices, do represent a class or category of initiatives within which the EPA might try to find an exemplary or best practice for invitation to the CEC Council Session. For example, including a school-based program, such as the Omaha Public Schools Green Initiative, in the programs highlighted at the Council Session is recommended, but in this case that particular initiative has not demonstrated job growth and therefore does not meet the criteria used by NAC to determine exemplary or best practice.
5. In the process of reviewing each nomination, the NAC also identified a set of characteristics for each nomination. For example, whether the nominations was a business sustainability initiative or a community engagement initiative. This was done so that the EPA might consider not only the

nominations themselves but what they represent in terms of perspective, organizers, stakeholders, and process, among others.

<b>Table 1. Recommendations from the NAC Regarding the Nominated Green Growth Initiatives</b>	
<b><i>Group A: Exemplary Activities and Best Practices</i></b>	
<b><i>Initiative</i></b>	<b><i>Characteristics</i></b>
Landfill Free	Business Sustainability initiative; Voluntary Program
Grid Alternatives	Non-Profit; Community Engagement; Energy Equity
Lakota Solar Enterprises	Non-profit; 100% tribal owners; energy equity; capacity building; job training
Wetland Restoration in Sagebrush	Public-Private - NGO-university partnership, broad stakeholder engagement; demonstrated results.
I-75 Corridor	Infrastructure project, scalable, growth and development, multilevel politics
Colorado State University Composting Program	Community engagement; initiatives by students; bottom up; capacity building; private food services
Star Communities	Certification program; well recognized; has community engagement process; structured and measurable criteria.
<b><i>Group B: Interesting or Unique Contribution to the Dialogue</i></b>	
NC Pollinator Project	Demonstration Project; early days; falls into this group because it is still a new project; fresh thinking.
Southern UTE Indian Tribe Methane Capture	Tribal Based; resource recovery; bottom up; replicable; highly adaptable in those cases where don't depend on carbon pricing
<b><i>Group C: Seek Exemplary Examples of these Types of Initiatives</i></b>	
Omaha Public Schools Green Initiative	School-based project; good idea; Early days so job growth yet

National Advisory Committee (NAC)  
To the U.S. Representative to the  
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**Advice 2017-6: Green Growth**  
*(Meeting – September 14-15, 2017)*

NAC Members offer three points of additional advice. The first is focused on the program overall, the second on creating a new resource to serve the larger green growth community and the third is focused on knowledge sharing about green growth across federal agencies as a way to raise the overall awareness of efforts and opportunities.

1. **Retain the Function of the NAECC, regardless of the Format.** NAC Members urge strongly that any negotiations that occur around NAECC, work to maintain the function of the program, if not the form.
2. **Create an Open and Accessible Green Growth Project Repository.** NAC members noted that in their efforts to identify exemplary activities and best practices for inclusion at the 2018 Council Session, they were surprised to find that no such repository exists. The discussion of this gap focused on building an open and accessible repository of green growth projects to highlight best practices and to provide access to related materials for such projects, for example, plans, engagement strategies, budgets, and performance reports.
3. **Create a Federal Agency Green Growth Initiatives Knowledge Sharing Network.** NAC Members discussed the fact that many federal agencies are working in the green growth space with little to know formal or informal knowledge of the programs or initiatives underway or being planned across other agencies. Building the repository would support this recommendation, but the NAC recommends a further investment in the creation of a “community of practice” to share knowledge and experiences as a way to raise the overall level of readiness and awareness with respect to green growth initiatives and opportunities.



National Advisory Committee (NAC)  
To the U.S. Representative to the  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

**Advice 2017-7: CEC Youth Innovation Challenge**  
*(Meeting – September 14-15, 2017)*

***DRAFT***

**DATE:** October 11, 2017

**TO:** Jane Nishida, Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs  
Luis Troche, Senior Advisor, North American Affairs, OITA, EPA

**FROM:** Theresa A. Pardo, Chair, NAC  
Jeffrey Wennberg, Chair GAC

**SUBJECT: Input from the NAC and GAC on the CEC Youth Innovation Challenge**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Environmental Protection Agency's consideration of ways to improve the CEC Youth Innovation Challenge Program. The following ideas were collected over two sessions during the September 2017 NAC/GAC meeting. The discussion focused primarily around the amount and nature of the prizes, branding and marketing the Challenge, increasing submissions, and securing program funding for the Challenge. Each set of ideas is presented below.

**Amount of the Prizes.** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the amount of the prizes and agreed, in general, that the amounts awarded, are in line with other such competitions and no changes to the award amounts are recommended. Therefore, we do not think an increase in the award amount is essential to success. We recommend that focusing on other aspects of the program will have more impact (as described below).

**The Nature of the Prizes.** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed motivations and agreed, in general, that what motivates people is access to opportunity. The Committees discussed creating awards that, in addition to a cash prize, include unique access to internships, mentors, interviews, and jobs. For example, one scenario discussed was that award winners would come to the Council meeting to present their work, but also, spend time in a workshop with experts who might help them build a better business case for their product or spend time meeting with venture capitalists pitching their ideas. Many commented that this kind of in-kind contribution of time and expertise might be a way to engage private sector partners. This model might also be a good way to engage groups such as the US Business Council for Sustainable Development and the US Business Council. These groups might not be able to give "cash" but the cost of their participation, which would be borne by them might be in alignment with their programmatic and philanthropic priorities.

***Engaging the Tech Sector.*** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the idea that engaging individuals from tech companies in the process might incentivize more submissions. Individuals may be more inclined to participate in the challenge if they know

that investors who might support some of the submissions will be at the Council Session. Such companies might be invited to serve on the review panels, come to the presentations, and be part of the mentoring and post-award support provided to the winners.

***Partner with the National Labs.*** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the idea of engaging the national laboratories in conversations about the Challenge explore ways they might participate in the award program. Again, the idea would be for the winners to gain access at the Labs to job interviews, internships, and mentoring, among other opportunities.

**Branding and Marketing.** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the need for a clearer branding of the initiative and the creation of a marketing strategy. The Committees agreed, for example, that an elevator pitch is needed as a way to quickly communicate the focus and value of the program. What is it about? What do you get if you win? Why should you participate?

***Naming.*** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the name of the initiative and recommend a renaming. We agreed, in general, that the use of the term “youth” is nonspecific and a bit confusing. Committee members discussed cases where the label “youth” has been applied to individuals ranging from childhood to graduate school. Calling college age students youth was seen as “odd” to some of the members. Changing the name, in the eyes of some committee, might generate more interest. Unfortunately, no specific alternatives are recommended.

**Cultivate Diversity.** The NAC and GAC Committees agreed that regardless of the changes to the Youth Innovation Challenge going forward, maintaining the foundational commitment to diversity is critical. Advice in this regard urges that the Challenge not be overly focused on submissions from institutions of higher education, but be vigilant in cultivating submissions from community-based efforts as well, such as tribal youth programs that focus on sustainability and green growth. The Committees recommend ensuring that any outreach related to the program be designed to build awareness among groups such as Historical Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU’s) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSA’s). Another idea is to create new categories that might incentivize joint submissions from teams that draw from university-based and community-based youth.

**Find and Partner with Entrepreneurship Programs.** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the existence of both community level and university level entrepreneurship programs. These programs were recognized as the source of the submissions. The Committees agreed that systematically reaching out to such programs and ensuring that they are aware of the Innovation Challenge and are provided with the information they need to present it as a viable and attractive option to the “youth” in those programs is likely to increase submission levels. Members identified several such centers including those at University of Iowa and Morehouse College in Atlanta. Both of these institutions have well developed innovation competitions each year and might see the CEC Youth Innovation Challenge as an opportunity for their students. In some cases, universities are offering semester long entrepreneurship courses where students are developing innovative products; ensuring that faculty and students in those programs know about the Innovation Challenge might result in new submissions.

**Find and Partner with Sustainability Programs.** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the existence of both community level and university level sustainability programs. These programs too, provide a potential new source of interest and submissions. Findings lists of such

programs might be difficult. However, discussion revealed the idea that related professional associations might be tapped for such lists, and in turn they themselves might be good partners. For example, The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education <http://www.aashe.org/> and the Global Association of Corporate Sustainability Officers, <http://www.gacso.org/>. Such associations might be amplifiers of the Challenge or they might even be interested in partnering in some way, in terms of the award package provided to the winners. A further example is Green for All. This program is a coalition in Oakland, CA, that focuses on communities of color and low income and encourages economic development in the green space. <https://www.greenforall.org/>. All of these associations are communities of practice and have knowledge sharing platforms that could be used to raise awareness of the Challenge – both in terms of submissions and to generate interest among potential partners, funders and others.

**Expanding Funding for the Program.** The NAC and GAC Committees discussed the opportunities that might exist in securing funding to expand the program from foundations, in particular. Discussions about groups such as the Gates Foundation, the Coca Cola Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Apple and Google all resulted in the agreement that a systematic and focused outreach to these groups is likely to generate some financial support. Overall the Committees agreed that substantial financial support sometimes has a multi-year lead time, but some discussion focused on the fact that in many cases, small awards are possible to turn around quickly. The Committees recommend a plan to pursue such funding and partnerships with an eye toward long term partnerships around the Challenge, but also to consider what might be possible in the short term in terms of financial support.

**CC:** Oscar Carrillo, Designated Federal Officer, FACMD