



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC - 1 2017

Theresa A. Pardo, Chair
University at Albany, State University of New York
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222

Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Dear Ms. Pardo:

On behalf of Administrator Pruitt, U.S. Council Member for the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), I thank you for the National Advisory Committee's (NAC) letter of advice of October 20, 2017. Our discussion at the September 14-15, 2017 meeting on how the Council could highlight North American state, tribal nations and private sector exemplary activities and experiences advancing green growth, North American trade and environmental protection was valuable and instructive.

We appreciate the comprehensive suggestions for engaging states, tribal nations, and private sector to share their experience and exemplary practices in advancing green growth, and North American trade and environmental protection. As you suggested, we are strategizing on CEC value-added and benefit statement messaging for these and other key stakeholders on specific activities. We also agree that building and strengthening awareness of the CEC and focusing on the basics is an essential step in engaging key stakeholders.

In line with your recommendation, we are working to help build the green growth constituency. The CEC just awarded nine NAPECA grants advancing innovation and partnerships for green growth. These grants support and engage key stakeholders in state/local/tribal communities, private sector, and youth in advancing green growth and building awareness and constituencies. We are also exploring featuring key stakeholders at the Council Session through the NAPECA, Youth Innovation Challenge, and the Council program.

NAC's suggestion of extending the Council Session may provide opportunity for additional capacity engagement. Unfortunately, resources and demands on the Ministers' time limit our ability for a longer session. However, we are focusing on strengthening the substantive and programmatic elements of the session and the value of the engagements for our stakeholders. We continue to capitalize on social media and web communications to expand the reach of the programs and impacts effectively. As usual, civil society can attend the CEC Council Session through limited travel grants, and more recently, through web and social media mechanisms.

We value your suggestion to host sessions or activities on green growth and recent natural disasters, such as hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Oklahoma is home to the US National Weather Center, located in the epicenter of tornado alley. We are exploring this valuable resource and its potential linkage to our CEC projects and initiatives, in terms of preparedness and resilience,

sustainability and growth as extreme weather impacts flora and fauna (pollinators, crops), infrastructure (power systems, farms, factories, mobility) and human lives.

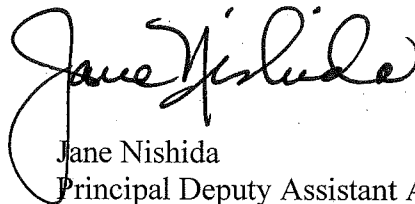
As you point out, we are working with EPA Liaisons to build knowledge sharing networks and awareness of CEC. This is particularly important for our NAPECA and youth innovation competitions, to disseminate information and resources from our work, and to invite and engage stakeholders.

We appreciate the thorough analysis and list of exemplary initiatives considered and provided by the NAC and the timely recommendations for our Youth Innovation Challenge (YIC). We have adopted NAC's recommendation to engage outside stakeholders in the YIC as panelists and mentors and are in the process of identifying diverse candidates from Canada, Mexico and the United States who bring experience in sustainability, entrepreneurship and mentorship.

Finally, thank you for the NAC's advice on the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation and the recommendation for a mechanism to coordinate and network green growth work in North America. We agree that such a resource would help create a community of practice to share knowledge and experiences to raise the overall level of readiness and awareness with respect to green growth initiatives and opportunities.

Thank you for all your time and efforts in providing this valuable advice and insight into our Council Session Preparations and Youth Innovation Challenge. We look forward to continue to working with you as we advance environmental cooperation in North America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Nishida". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "N".

Jane Nishida
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of International & Tribal Affairs