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

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**Committee  
Members**

Octaviana V Trujillo

**Chair**

*Pascua Yaqui Tribe*

John Bernal  
*Arizona*

Ginny Broadhurst  
*Washington*

Salud Carbajal  
*California*

Kirk Cook  
*Washington*

Katherine Gajewski  
*Pennsylvania*

Teri Goodmann  
*Iowa*

Carlos Rubinstein  
*Texas*

Dale Medearis  
*Virginia*

Edna Mendoza  
*Arizona*

Alejandro Rodarte  
*California*

Carlos Rubinstein  
*Texas*

Cristina Viesca  
*Texas*

Roger Vintze  
*California*

Gerald Wagner  
*Blackfeet Tribe*

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Representative to the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) met on October 25-26, 2012 in Washington, D.C. It is my pleasure to submit to you the following report from our meeting. The report includes advice on the two major topics: 1) potential CEC projects to include in the CEC's 2013 Operational Plan, and 2) opportunities in the new CEC Communication Strategy.

The meeting began with an update of U.S. priorities and the status of the draft CEC Operational Plan by Michael Stahl, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs (OITA). We also received an update on the CEC's Operational Plan and Communication Strategy by Sylvia Correa, Senior Advisor for North America in OITA.

We also heard reports from JPAC member Jon Waterhouse on the results of the JPAC session at the CEC Council Session in New Orleans. The CEC Executive Director Evan Lloyd, also provided a presentation on the status of the CEC's Article 13<sup>th</sup> report on Spent Lead Acid Batteries and on the CEC's Trade and Environment report.

The GAC is grateful for the presence of these individuals at our meeting. The information and insight they bring to our deliberations is appreciated by the committee and we believe that the value of the advice we offer is significantly enhanced by their participation.

The October meeting marked the first for members starting new terms on the committee. Our six new members participated fully in all discussions and actively contributed to the advice offered here. The returning members of the GAC welcome Ginny Broadhurst from the State of Washington, Katherine Gajewski from Pennsylvania, Dale Medearis from Virginia, Edna Mendoza from Arizona, Alejandro Rodarte from California and Cristina Viesca-Santos from Texas. We also wish to note our appreciation for the service of the two members whose terms expired; Jeffrey Wennberg, outgoing Chair from Vermont, Carola Serrato, from Texas.

We would also like to thank Michelle DePass for her June 20, 2012 letter responding to our advice letter of May 16, 2012. As always, we sincerely appreciate the participation from EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs and the Office of Federal Advisory Committee

Management. In addition to Michael Stahl and Sylvia Correa who were mentioned earlier, Jane Nishida, Director of the Office of Regional and Bilateral Affairs, in OITA attended and contributed, as did Cynthia Jones-Jackson, Mark Joyce, and Oscar Carrillo from OFACMO. And of course, we are grateful for the excellent administrative support we have received from staff at OFACMO, particularly Stephanie McCoy and Gloria Allen.

In conclusion, we thank you for EPA's continued support of our role in the enhancement of environmental conditions throughout North America and we hope you find our advice helpful.

Sincerely,



Dr. Octaviana V. Trujillo, Chair  
Governmental Advisory Committee

cc: Michelle DePass, Assistant Administrator, Office of International and Tribal Affairs  
Michael Stahl, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of International and Tribal Affairs  
Cynthia Jones-Jackson, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Management and Outreach  
Oscar Carrillo, Designated Federal Officer  
Brian L. Houseal, Chair, U.S. National Advisory Committee  
Irasema Coronado, Executive Director, Commission on Environmental Cooperation  
Martin Gutierrez Lacayo, Chair, Joint Public Advisory Committee  
Members of the U.S. National Advisory Committee

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)  
to the U.S. Representative to the  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

**Advice 2012-3: CEC Operational Plan**

The charge questions for this meeting asked the GAC to provide advice on strategic projects for the new operational plan that would address issues related to greening the economy on the topics of: electronic waste, advancing on trilateral clean energy initiatives and other specific economic integrated sectors in North America.

The GAC provided the preliminary outline advice in October for the CEC Operational Plan. However, we would like to elaborate on the details of a new project called the “assessment of environmental impacts of solid waste practices in rural and indigenous communities.” We think this project addresses the three CEC priority areas of greening the economy, climate change, and healthy communities’ healthy ecosystems.

The management of solid waste in North America has, over the past several decades, been the source of numerous environmental incidents that have had profound impacts on segments of the general public. In recognition of this fact, NAFTA partners have made significant progress in enhancing regulatory and design requirements for solid waste facilities to reduce or eliminate their negative impacts to the environment and human health. However, the implementation of these actions is not uniform across communities. Because of the expense and availability of technical expertise, the progress made to address the environmental and human health impacts of solid waste management and disposal have been disproportionately directed to centers of high populations or areas with significant financial resources. The result has been a “neglect” of progress in solid waste management practices and facilities in disadvantaged areas, mainly those in rural and indigenous communities.

This disparity appears to have hampered efforts to improve air, land, and water quality in many rural and indigenous communities. In some cases this has opened the door for cheap disposal of hazardous materials by industry and others in outdated or inadequate facilities existing within these communities. These actions do open issues related to environmental justice within the borders of the three NAFTA partners.

In order to assess the prevalence and magnitude of issues surrounding inadequate management and disposal of solid waste in “at risk” communities, the GAC proposes a new potential project that would focus on improving the environment and human health within rural and indigenous communities. This project would initially focus on three critical elements:

- Conducting an inventory of current solid waste management practices in three to five pilot areas within the boundaries of the NAFTA partners
- Identifying the gaps and barriers to adequate solid waste management practices in the pilot communities
- Identify tools, resources and best management practices for implementation of improved solid waste management and enhanced environmental protection.

Successful implementation and completion of the project will provide the NAFTA partners a path forward to address conditions that degrade the living conditions of some of their citizens, potentially address inappropriate trade advantages (due to costs savings from improper disposal

of industrial waste streams), and potentially create financial benefits to disadvantaged communities through implementation of innovative recycling and waste stream segregation opportunities.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**General:**

- *That all CEC projects incorporate performance measures and outcomes*
- *Serious consideration to scaling back the number of projects, as to make them more strategic and focused*
- *Moving North American Grasslands project to the climate change pillar*
- *Potential “sun-setting” of the automotive supply project, due to its success; can be used as a model for best practices*

**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*

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**Advice 2012-4: Communications Strategy and Other Matters**

The charge questions of the October 2012 meeting asked the GAC to provide advice on identifying specific opportunities for the committees to implement the new communication strategy, i.e., via outreach in venues within their represented sectors (state, local, and tribal governments).

The GAC had a robust discussion on this issue and decided that one of the best ways to provide information to the public on current CEC activities would be to develop a quarterly e-newsletter with a “news” section on the Council, JPAC, NAC and GAC, and any other relevant groups and a calendar section with dates of meetings. It would be important to highlight successes or accomplishments, and relevant web links so members of the public have the ability to get more detailed information.

The GAC also identified and recommended several organizations where GAC members can be megaphones to distribute information on the CEC’s work. The GAC envisions attending the annual meetings of these organizations and being megaphones for the work of the CEC. This can happen by making formal presentations or distributing printed materials. In order to deliver a succinct message, the GAC requested receiving generic CEC presentations from the CEC Secretariat. The groups identified by the local government representatives of the GAC are the: National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, American Solid Waste Association, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of Urban Planners. GAC State government representatives identified the following organizations: Environmental Council of the States, National Governors Association, Border Governors Conference, Western Governors Association, Western States Water Council, Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. Tribal GAC representatives identified the following organizations to reach out on CEC matters: National Congress of American Indians, National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples, and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals.

**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: in local, State and Tribal government conferences.*

<b>Local</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Tribal</b>
<i>National Association of Counties</i>	<i>Environmental Council of the States</i>	<i>National Congress of American Indians</i>
<i>National League of Cities</i>	<i>National Governors Association</i>	<i>NEJAC Subcommittee on Indigenous People’s</i>
<i>American Solid Waste Association</i>	<i>Border Governors Conference</i>	<i>Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals</i>
<i>U.S. Conference of Mayors</i>	<i>Western Governors Association</i>	
<i>National Assoc. of Urban Planners</i>	<i>Western States Water Council</i>	
	<i>Conference of US/Canada Premiers</i>	