



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

DEC 22 2015

OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL AND TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Jeffrey Wennberg, Chair
U.S. Governmental Advisory Committee
VT Department of Environment Conservation
103 South Main St, Building 1 South
Waterbury, VT 05641-0401

Dear Mr. Wennberg,

On behalf of Administrator Gina McCarthy, I would like to thank you for the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) letter of advice of November 25, 2015, reporting on our forty-fifth meeting held by videoconference on October 23 2015. We value our friendship with the GAC and appreciate the comments made by the members as we strive to keep the momentum going following a very busy and successful year as the Chair for the CEC.

Recommendations on Charge Question: Maintain momentum during political transitions

- 1. The GAC anticipates continued support for the Strategic Priorities through this transitional period. We see no impediment to the completion of the Operational Plan projects.*
- 2. Greater consideration should be given to cross-cutting transportation-related projects in the next Operational Plan.*
- 3. The U.S. and its partners on the Council should encourage the new executive director to continue the administrative and policy reforms initiated by Executive Director Coronado.*

Thank you for your ideas and advice. We also anticipate that the momentum of the CEC work will advance through the political transitions the three governments' are experiencing at this time. We agree that the projects identified for the current Operational Plan are well-suited to the strategic priorities identified by the Council, and we appreciate the support of the GAC in identifying both the priorities and the projects. We also agree that consideration of cross-cutting transportation-related projects is an appropriate strategy to involve key stakeholders in meaningful ways on an issue relevant to all of us in North America, and we look forward to raising it as the discussions begin for the next Operational Plan.

As the new Executive Director of the CEC Secretariat is selected, we will consider how to best encourage the continued review of existing administrative policies and to take advantage of new tools, technologies and business practices that will continue to move the CEC towards

becoming a high performing organization to ensure progress and achieve results.

Comments on Response Letter dated September 16, 2015:

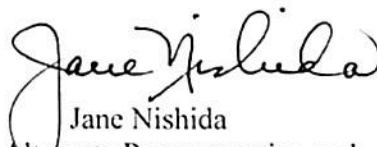
- 1. Please provide more information about BECC and NAD Bank studies of post-installation community reactions to renewable energy projects.*
- 2. Please provide a background briefing on the growth of oil trains and attendant environmental and safety concerns, especially as they affect cross-border regions.*

Regarding the reference in our September 16, 2015 letter to you concerning studies undertaken by the BECC and NAD Bank, we were, regretfully, misinformed as to the nature and availability of what we referred to as "studies". The studies are not focused on community reactions to renewable energy projects; they simply describe the actual project undertaken, its location, its sponsors, and its projected cost. In fact, they are not what we think of as studies at all, but merely descriptions of the projects undertaken by the BECC and underwritten by the NADBank. These "studies" are published at each institutions' websites: www.becc.org, and www.nadb.org, and you should connect directly to those websites to see for yourself that the information contained in each is not an analysis of community reaction by any means.

Pursuant to the GAC request of a background briefing on oil trains, we contacted EPA's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the designated lead federal agency for the government's response to, preparation for and prevention of environmental emergencies. Working with other federal sister agencies, state, local and tribal governments, OEM's emergency responders are ready to deploy to anywhere in the country at a moment's notice. This team of experts receives multiple requests for briefings each year, but their focus remain on responding to emergencies, preventing future ones and continuous training on the cutting edge technologies used to protect human health and the environment. However, in striving to keep our citizens informed of possible immediate dangers and future accidents, OEM's National Response Team developed a webinar presentation on Bakken oil trains, which we are making available to you electronically for your convenience (<https://nrtqa.ert.org/Main/Resources.aspx?ResourceType=Training>). Additional information about OEM's Response, Prevention and Preparedness Activities may be found at: www2.epa.gov/emergency-response.

Thank you again, for your valuable advice. We look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen the CEC as a catalyst for cooperative action in the trilateral arena.

Sincerely,



Jane Nishida
U.S. Alternate Representative and
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator