



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

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Brian Houseal, Chair, U.S. National Advisory Committee
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Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Dear Mr. Houseal:

On behalf of Administrator Gina McCarthy, I would like to thank you for the National Advisory Committee (NAC) letter of advice of May 20th, 2016 reporting on the forty-sixth meeting held on April 20-21, 2016 in Washington, D.C. We appreciate the NAC's commitment to advance the mission of the CEC through the advice provided on important tri-national environmental issues.

We truly appreciate your recognition of the forward movement made by some of our key initiatives, and other accomplishments related to some of our key environmental challenges in North America and globally as well.

Recommendations on Youth Engagement:

- (1) *That the CEC develop a mission statement for youth engagement with a clear vision, goals and metrics before the Council amends or approves related programs and financial resources.*

We agree that we should approach integrating youth into the daily CEC activities with caution, particularly in light of CEC budget constraints and the commitments we have already made to our TEK Roster of Experts. At the same time developing a vision and plan for engaging youth in the CEC process will be important.

- (2) *The youth programs should prioritize tribal youth, under-represented and minority youth, and youth in communities most vulnerable to the impacts of Global Environmental Change; and use experiential environmental learning opportunities to the greatest extent possible.*

We agree with your recommendation and intend to include this as a criteria if we reach trilateral consensus to integrate a youth activity in the CEC's work program. As you know, EPA has targeted communities with potential environmental justice concerns for assistance using collaborative problem-solving strategies in our efforts to achieve environmental and/or public health improvements. We will build on the relationships created through those programs to support a priority focus across North America.

- (3) *Recommendations on conditions needed prior to establishing the above recommendations include: Youth engagement programs focusing on the Strategic Plan and cross-cutting themes; NAC, GAC could incorporate youth as interns or members; amending NAPECA grant guidelines and targeting Youth Cohorts, and maximizing partnerships with existing programs.*

We agree that serious consideration should be given to the preconditions you identify above before proceeding with any concrete way forward. Certainly, it makes sense to begin any future activity with some of the low-hanging fruit identified, such as the using our advisory committees as a first step in incorporating Youth into the CEC process. Other suggestions, such as forming a targeted youth cohort, could be considered later in the process.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge:

Thank you for your thoughts on how we can better incorporate the TEK Roster of Experts into the work of the CEC. In March 2016, at the first face-to-face meeting of the 15 TEK Roster members, the JPAC representatives and the Parties, there was general agreement that the structure created through the Terms of Operation (ToO) was not conducive to the level of participation envisioned by the Council, the Tribal experts or the JPAC.

In its advice to Council of May 24, 2016, the JPAC, working collaboratively with and the full participation of the TEK Roster members, proposed changes that accomplishes TEK incorporation in a more meaningful manner. The resulting advice proposed three key documents considered crucial to guide the CEC's relationship with and engagement of the Roster of Experts:

- A TEK Statement of Principles;
- a TEK Guidelines document outlining the principles under which the Roster would work to integrate TEK in CEC activities; and,
- an Atlas that would identify the issues related to TEK, such as the location of experts in North America with a specific expertise related to possible environmental issues that could arise.

These documents are being prepared for review at the Council Session. The US is also prepared to propose recommendations to adequately provide a budget to facilitate the TEK work and to provide direct access to the government decision makers when the Council meets.

MOU on Climate and Energy Collaboration:


Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the Climate and Energy Collaboration. Please be assured that we always strive for policy coherence and we work closely with our sister agencies like DOE on many issues, including climate and energy collaboration. We are currently participating in an interagency process led by the White House in developing policy issues for the North America Leader's Summit.

Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment (TEIA):

We agree completely with your assessment that real progress is being made on North American environmental issues, and that the NAAEC is, in great part, responsible for the forward movement. It is hard to imagine how the three countries in North America could have moved as far as we have in the last twenty-plus years were it not for the NAAEC and the Parties' determination to promote regional environmental cooperation in the midst of a globalization of our economies. From our perspective, we would argue that the Parties have achieved the spirit of Article 10(7) on the NAAEC, if not the actuality of a TEIA agreement. However, we will continue to assess the applicability of the TEIA provisions moving forward.

As always, we appreciate and value the guidance you provide to this important program, and look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen the CEC as a catalyst for trilateral cooperative action.

Sincerely,



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