



Commission for Environmental Cooperation
of North America

Comisión para la Cooperación Ambiental
de América del Norte

Commission de coopération environnementale
de l'Amérique du Nord

CEC Ministerial Statement

Thirteenth Regular Session of the CEC Council

Washington, DC, 28 June 2006—We, the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States, members of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC or “the Commission”), met for our annual Regular Session on 28 June 2006, to reaffirm our commitment to the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, to a healthier environment in the region, and to set a course for the coming year.

We approve of the progress that has been made under the CEC’s three strategic pillars: Information for Decision-Making, Capacity Building, and Trade and Environment.

Along with our cooperative work program, we note the important work that the Secretariat is undertaking with the upcoming Article 13 report, *Green Building in North America: Opportunities and Challenges*, and with citizen submissions pursuant to Articles 14 and 15 of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC).

Information for Decision-Making

The CEC’s long-term goal is to support better decision-making by providing information on the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing North America.

Specific initiatives discussed today will strengthen the capacity of government, scientific and private sectors to understand North American environmental issues of common concern. Notably, we applaud the addition of data and other refinements to the CEC’s online North American Environmental Atlas.

We also note significant progress toward an environmental information framework for North America as we look forward to Mexico’s first data from its mandatory pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR) (*Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes* (RETC)) that will be published later this year. This marks a milestone toward our long-term commitment to comparability of North American PRTRs and will enhance the ability to assess this information on a regional basis.

Capacity Building

We renew our commitment to strengthen capacities in our three countries to manage environmental issues of common concern by sharing what each of us does best.

Today we marked progress toward our five-year objectives to improve compliance with wildlife laws, to enhance private sector environmental performance, and to strengthen our cooperative ability to assess and manage chemicals of concern.

Specifically, we note the success of our initiative to improve environmental performance and competitiveness of small and medium-size businesses in Mexico. This initiative has helped international companies and their local partners generate economic savings and environmental benefits by “greening” their supply chains.

Following a decision by Council to expand CEC involvement with the private sector, we have determined to work in partnership with the North American automobile sector to promote enhanced environmental performance throughout its supply chains.

We applaud the support of federal, state, and university personnel in each of our three countries who have assisted us with training and knowledge to enhance the capacity of wildlife management authorities and others working at the local level in Mexico to manage habitats and conserve marine and terrestrial species of common conservation concern.

Trade and Environment

The CEC's goal is to promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade and the economy. We acknowledge the ongoing collaboration of our trade and environment officials to increase our capacity to identify and address trade-related environmental concerns, to broaden understanding of trade and environment linkages, and to improve regional and national coordination.

In particular, we acknowledge the progress of our energy experts to promote development of the North American renewable energy market with the attendant security, environmental, and social benefits that renewable energy provides.

We applaud the progress of the CEC project that seeks to protect North America's marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems from the harmful effects of invasive alien species. We anticipate these efforts will help inform the public and all levels of government as they identify priority ecosystems and design mitigation measures. The success of these efforts demonstrates the effectiveness of the strategy adopted in 2005 to guide our work on trade, environment and the economy.

We look forward next year to the participation of civil society and the private sector in the fourth North American Symposium on Assessing the Environmental Effects of Trade, which will focus on the services sector.

Sound Management of Chemicals

We have directed the SMOC Working Group to move toward the realization of a strategy for the sound management of chemicals in North America, to address issues of mutual concern, to support our priorities and advance the Parties' shared international objectives, and to do so in an open, inclusive, participatory, and transparent manner.

We are pleased to have met with our Joint Public Advisory Committee and to have received their input on such matters as increasing the involvement of indigenous and local communities in the work of the CEC. We also appreciate the contributions of our respective advisory committees, including the newly formed national advisory committee from Mexico. We have important work ahead of us and invite all our partners to join us in building a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable North American environment for future generations.

The CEC was established by Canada, Mexico and the United States to build cooperation among the NAFTA partners in implementing the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), the environmental side accord to the NAFTA. The CEC addresses environmental issues of North American concern, with particular attention to the environmental challenges and opportunities presented by North America-wide free trade. The Council, the CEC's governing body, is composed of the federal environment ministers (or equivalent) of the three countries, and meets at least once a year. The Council members are Canadian Environment Minister Rona Ambrose, Mexican Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources, José Luis Luege Tamargo and US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) is a 15-member, independent, volunteer body that provides advice and public input to Council on any matter within the scope of NAAEC.

For more information on any of the topics reviewed by Council, visit <http://www.cec.org>.