



Commission for Environmental Cooperation
Comisión para la Cooperación Ambiental
Commission de coopération environnementale

27 June 2018

CEC Council Statement - 2018

Twenty-Fifth Regular Session of the CEC Council

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States, 27 June 2018—For the past twenty-four years, the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States, in collaboration with civil society across North America, have worked together through the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) to address key environmental issues linked to trade among our three countries. We met for our 25th annual Regular Session, focusing on “Innovation and Partnerships for Green Growth.” The session showcased partnerships among federal, state and local, indigenous, academic, youth and private sectors that foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological advances to support environmental protection and ecosystems in North America.

Sustainable Communities, Green Growth, and Resilient Economies through Innovation and Partnerships

At the US National Weather Center in Norman, Oklahoma, our countries’ academic, government, and private sector partners demonstrated how science, innovation, radar, modeling and technology help us to monitor the atmosphere and climate to inform our research, policies, and preparedness to address extreme events and their impacts on human health, the environment, economic growth and productivity. These technologies can help advance CEC efforts to track North American species migrations and protect species and their habitats critical to environmental sustainability and ecotourism, and ultimately promote sustainable communities and ecosystems. We also held a public session with experts from state governments, academia and the private sector to discuss ways to promote innovation and partnerships that support green growth in North America.

CEC Operational Plan 2017–2018

Last year, in Prince Edward Island, Canada, we approved our second Operational Plan implementing our 2015–2020 Strategic Plan, with a focus on fewer and more impactful projects. We are pleased with the progress to date in implementing the ten cooperative projects that address our shared priorities. These include: monitoring health effects from extreme weather; mitigating food loss and waste and its associated social, environmental and economic costs; greening marine transport to reduce pollution from the transport of our growing international trade; partnering with the private sector to increase industrial energy efficiency and reduce pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions; supporting species conservation through sustainable trade of species; and building capacity to reduce sources of marine litter and their impacts to habitats, fisheries and the economy. We continue to work with our experts and the Secretariat to accomplish the goals and objectives of our Strategic and Operational Plans and showcase CEC accomplishments.

Youth Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Partnerships for Green Growth

Continuing our efforts initiated in 2016 in Mérida, Mexico, to produce tangible initiatives for youth engagement, and building upon the first Youth Innovation Challenge (YIC) completed at our 2017 Session in Prince Edward Island, Canada, we have just completed a second YIC to engage and harness the creativity of North American youth in the work of the CEC and promote young entrepreneurship, innovation and partnerships for sustainable growth. We received over 200 creative and inspiring science and business ideas for green growth that address complex sustainability challenges facing North America. To evaluate these ideas, we established a trilateral expert panel with diverse experience in startup venture, corporate sustainability, academic collaboration, and technical know-how. To enhance the winning concepts and showcase the value of academic, government and private sector collaboration, we partnered with the Tom Love Innovation Hub and the Ronnie K. Irani Center at the University of Oklahoma, Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, and the Autonomous University of Querétaro and Anáhuac University in Mexico to assist with the design, software and marketing strategies of the winning projects. We are proud to support the winning projects focused on preventing microplastics pollution from synthetic garments, producing natural and biodegradable alternatives to plastics, and processing waste water and organic waste into reusable resources.

Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) and Secretariat

We acknowledge and appreciate the valuable contributions to North American environmental stewardship made by the members of the JPAC and their continued efforts to reach out to civil society on issues of global and regional importance, including emerging trade and environment challenges in North America. In this session, JPAC reported to the Council on ways to further engage the private sector in CEC initiatives, including exploring potential partnerships to leverage resources and active participation. JPAC also highlighted opportunities for sustainable economic development through enhanced collaboration with the private sector, local communities and indigenous entrepreneurs.

We also acknowledge and thank the Secretariat for its expert and timely support to the Council and managing and implementing projects, initiatives, and other CEC efforts.

Submissions on Enforcement Matters

The Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process continues to provide a valuable public participation mechanism, promoting the effective enforcement of environmental law in our three countries. The Secretariat has received three new submissions in 2017-18 and is finalizing its 23rd factual record. The Secretariat continues to implement the Council's direction to expand outreach and awareness of the SEM process as a mechanism for public engagement and we encourage the North American public to capitalize on this resource.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)

We are grateful to the members of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG) for their contributions to the integration of TEK in the operation and activities of the CEC. We also

appreciate the participation of indigenous representatives in several projects of the CEC Operational Plan, including NAPECA, where six NAPECA grants awarded in the 2017-2018 cycle are led by, or serve, indigenous and local communities to advance preservation and teaching of TEK, sustainability and growth.

New Initiatives

We are pleased to announce three new initiatives that will advance trilateral partnerships on innovation in green growth and preparedness, resilience to extreme events in North America, and monitoring the atmosphere and climate. These initiatives are:

- North American Innovation Hub Network – bringing universities in the US, Canada, and Mexico together to develop and enhance Innovation Hubs that provide a resource for innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth.
- North American Extreme Events Advisory Group – bringing experts together to identify and share capacities in interdisciplinary research, prediction and response to extreme events, such as drought, wildfires and extreme temperatures.
- Mapping Extreme Events information on the CEC North American Environmental Atlas – enhance the mapping of extreme events in North America by bringing experts together to share data and information in the CEC North American Environmental Atlas.

Conclusion

We are proud that the CEC was the first trilateral forum for promoting a regional collaborative approach to environmental protection in North America, including the effective enforcement of our laws. The CEC has served as a longstanding platform for environmental cooperation among Canada, Mexico and the United States to tackle current and emerging challenges on sustainability, growth, and environmental and ecosystem protection in the context of North American trade. We share a vision for innovation and partnerships to advance green growth and environmental protection and are committed to a continued dialogue on environmental cooperation and engagement with the public, youth, indigenous and local communities, academia and the private sector to advance environmental protection in North America.

We look forward to meeting next year in Mexico.

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL:

Isabelle Bérard

Government of Canada

Enrique Lendo Fuentes

Government of the United Mexican States

Jane Nishida

Government of the United States of America