



DISTRIBUTION: General
J/01-04/ADV/01-10
ORIGINAL: English

ADVICE TO COUNCIL: NO. 01-10

Re: Public Portion of the Council Session

The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America:

IN ACCORDANCE with its mandate to provide advice to Council under Article 16(4) of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC);

HAVING provided prior Advice to Council 96-03 and 99-12 on how to improve the public portion of the Council Session held annually in June;

RECOGNIZING the continued improvements made at the 2001 Council Session;

SUPPORTIVE of Council's desire for continuous improvement;

THEREFORE, makes the following recommendations to Council on how to improve the public portion of these important sessions. [Note: This advice is limited to the public portion of the Council Session. JPAC will continue to meet Council formally in-camera to pursue discussions and public input over the Council Session.]

General Organizational Rules

- Establish a direct link between the JPAC regular sessions and the public portion of the Council Sessions;
- Identify a specific theme in advance of the annual session to focus the discussions;
- Hold the public portion of the Council Session before Council's in-camera meeting in order that the public may have an opportunity to exchange views and suggestions with the Council members before final decisions are taken;
- Include adequate time for the public to meet among themselves to encourage networking;
- Continue to ensure some time during the program where the public will have the opportunity to make comments to the Council on any issue related to the scope of the NAAEC;
- As was the case for the public portion of the Council Session in 2001, allow adequate time in the session with Council for presentations from the public and responses from Council members; and
- Confirm the dates and location of the next Council Session at the end of the current Session and begin to promote it to improve public awareness and participation for the next year.

Specific Theme for 2002

- As stated in JPAC Advice to Council 01-08 on the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC), JPAC intends to take up the questions of education and capacity building opportunities for the SMOC working group and the public.

The 2002 program should be organized as follows:

Day One

- Welcome and report from the JPAC Chair, the Alternate Representatives, the CEC Executive Director, and the National and Government Advisory Committee representatives, including a period for questions (1 hour);
- Plenary session on SMOC, including brief presentations by the SMOC working group representatives and questions from the public (1 hour);
- Parallel JPAC round tables, one on education and the other on capacity building related to SMOC. The facilitator for each round table, a JPAC member, will have the mandate to summarize the discussion from each round table at the public portion of the Council Session (3–4 hours); and
- Networking session where the public will have opportunities to meet to prepare common presentations (participants will prepare questions or comments and have them organized prior to public portion of the Council Session). By the end of this session, the participants will have to select three rapporteurs (one from each country) to present the major elements that should be brought up at the public portion of the Council Session. JPAC could assist or observe (2 hours).

Day Two

- Official Opening of the Council Session (1 hour);
- Public portion of the Council Session (3 hours):
 - a) JPAC round table presentations on education and capacity building opportunities for the SMOC working group and the public (30 minutes: 15 minutes for each presentation made by the two facilitators followed by 15 minutes for comments by the Council);
 - b) Presentation of results from the Networking Session (45 minutes: 10 minutes for each presentation made by the rapporteurs—one from each country—followed by 15 minutes for comments by the Council);
 - c) Presentations from the public (individuals who would like to make an oral presentation during the section of the public portion of the Council session must indicate it on the pre-registration form). Around 26 presentations will be grouped in blocks according to the four CEC program areas and the NAAEC Specific Obligations (one hour and a half: three minutes per presentation, followed after each block by six minutes of comments by the Council). If the time permits, the Council should open the floor to the non-preregistered members of public.
- JPAC regular session on potential advice to Council (session open to the public as observers).

Day three

- JPAC regular session on administrative issues (session open to the public as observers)