



**ADVICE TO COUNCIL NO: 10-01**

**Re: Roundtable Discussion on the CEC's Priorities for 2010 and Beyond**

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

**IN ACCORDANCE** with Article 16(4) of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) which states that JPAC "may provide advice to Council on any matter within the scope of this agreement [...] and on the implementation and further elaboration of this agreement, and may perform such other functions as the Council may direct"; and

**HAVING** conducted a Roundtable Discussion in Los Cabos, Mexico, on the new priorities outlined by the CEC's Council of Ministers last June, which featured sessions with invited experts from Canada, Mexico and the United States, as well as public participation via a live Webcast;

**SUBMITS** the following observations and comments for Council's consideration:

**Healthy Communities and Ecosystems**

The term "ecological services" refers to the benefits received from the operation of full, healthy ecosystems whose processes support life and the quality thereof. The degradation of ecosystems leads to the degradation of communities' quality of life and to the impairment of human health. For example, degraded soil not only loses productivity but may also be subject to wind erosion and contribute to an increase in respiratory illness. Air, soil and water pollution affect not only biodiversity but also human health.

These ecological services include the balancing of atmospheric gases; moderation of macro- and micro-climates; flood and drought mitigation; waste detoxification and decomposition; generation and renewal of soils and soil fertility; pollination of agricultural crops and natural vegetation; pest and disease control; seed dispersal; availability of nutrients; water capture, flow and purification; maintenance of healthy levels of biodiversity; as well as scenic beauty and other natural features of ethical and cultural value.

JPAC strongly supports the CEC Council's desire to establish healthy communities and ecosystems as a priority, and therefore recommends that the CEC:

- Establish a committee to identify North American ecosystems of high relevance for the ecological services they provide, with recommendations on how to protect their health and restore any declining services while supporting free trade in North America;
- Assess the impact to North American communities from impaired ecosystems and from any decline in ecological services, and promote markets for ecosystem services resulting from the functioning of healthy ecosystems; and
- Evaluate methods to help engage communities, developing economic policy that reinforces environmental protection and sustainable development at the community level.

### **Climate Change-Low-Carbon Economy**

Given the growing impacts to North America and the rest of the world from climate change, JPAC recommends that the CEC provide assistance to the North American Parties in establishing mechanisms to promote a shift to a low-carbon economy in North America. To achieve that goal, the JPAC recommends that the CEC:

- Assist with harmonizing North American regulatory policies and standards for energy efficiency and mitigation of GHG emissions, giving special attention to methane, carbon particles and other CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, which can provide significant energy and economic benefits and can potentially produce faster positive environmental results than CO<sub>2</sub> reductions;
- Promptly create a definition accepted continent-wide of what is considered clean energy and what is considered renewable energy;
- Develop recommendations for improving fuel efficiency and clean fuel standards to reduce emissions from motor vehicles; promote renewable energies and improve energy efficiency for the industrial and residential sectors;
- Identify and evaluate long-term financial strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, such as North American Development Bank (NADB) initiatives, carbon markets, carbon taxes, and Copenhagen Green Fund, when established; in coherence with the economic, environmental, social and legal schemes of the three countries in order to promote such strategies; and
- Encourage capacity building on climate programs by engaging all levels of government, industry, the private and academic sectors, and the public in planning the systems of tomorrow—i.e., transportation, water, energy, forestry, agriculture, local trades / business, buildings and public infrastructure and study ways to minimize the transition effects on the citizens of North America in its shift to a low-carbon economy.

## **Greening the Economy in North America**

The members of JPAC believe that the North American community must move toward an economy that relies on clean energy and the reduction of GHG emissions, in concert with economic growth. To achieve this goal, JPAC recommends that the CEC:

- Establish uniform eco-labeling across the three countries on the carbon footprint of energy consumption from key consumer products, such as inefficient, energy-demanding appliances, similar to or as an addition to existing labels on energy consumption; and
- Implement a North America-wide certification system for bio-fuels. Discourage the existing practice of sending energy-consuming, older products into Mexico from Canada and the United States.

JPAC suggests that these recommendations be carried out within five (5) years and be accomplished in a framework of trilateral cooperation. JPAC would be pleased to provide additional specific recommendations to accomplish these goals.

**Approved by the JPAC members  
15 February 2010**

