



Eric Dannenmaier
Chair, Joint Public Advisory Committee
Commission for Environmental Cooperation
393, Rue St-Jaques Ouest, Bureau 200
Montreal QC H2Y 1N9

Dear Mr. Dannenmaier:

On behalf of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), I would like to thank the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) for its advice to Council No: 16-02 regarding outputs from the JPAC Workshop in Mérida. We were very pleased that the JPAC had the opportunity to engage with the public on the important links between biodiversity and climate change.

We recognize that the global decline of biodiversity is one of the most serious environmental issues that we face. We also note that the JPAC's conclusions - healthy ecological systems contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation; climate change adversely affects biodiversity; and changes in biodiversity levels will have significant impacts on human health and wellbeing as well as on the North American economy - are in line with the strategic plan and projects at the CEC.

Since the inception of the *North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation* (NAAEC) and the CEC, the three Parties have been working, per NAAEC objective 1c, to increase cooperation to better conserve, protect, and enhance the environment, including wild flora and fauna. "Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems" is one of the three pillars within the CEC 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. As you are well aware, the CEC engaged in a number of projects within the 2015-2016 Operational Plan to deliver on this priority.

Our work on Blue Carbon, for example, recognizes the explicit role that biodiversity has in helping to address the impacts of climate change, as we seek to understand how coastal and marine ecosystems factor into North America's carbon cycle. With respect to coastal diversity, we are developing a North American approach to Marine Protected Area management effectiveness and coastal community resilience that takes into account climate and other impacts on species, ecosystems, and people. These projects highlight the important benefits that biodiversity provide, both with respect to healthy communities and a clean environment.

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Since 1995, the CEC has been engaged in biodiversity conservation, and this work continues with a number of projects. Currently, our work to strengthen conservation and sustainable trade of selected CITES Appendix II species underscores how important biodiversity is to the environmental and economic health of our communities, in particular for Indigenous peoples and local communities, across the continent. Our work with respect to arctic migratory birds and the monarch butterfly focuses on the importance of ecological corridors, how conservation efforts can benefit from engagement with Indigenous peoples and local communities, and contribute to sustainable development. As you rightly point out, it is very important that we continue to engage with traditional ecological knowledge holders, which Council has done through the CEC's Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Expert Group.

In December 2016, high-level officials from all three of our countries were pleased to attend the 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) hosted by Mexico in Cancun. During the conference, the Parties to the CBD committed to continue to mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through a number of actions across four industry sectors: agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and tourism. The Conference also adopted a decision on the links between biodiversity and climate change. Our three countries have domestically expressed support for the overarching objectives of the CBD.

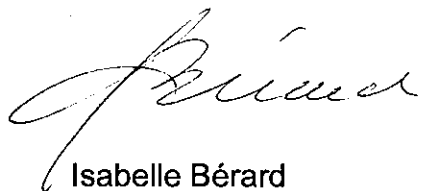
Finally, the plenary theme of the XXII Annual Meeting of the Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, which was held from 15 to 19 May 2017 in Ensenada, Mexico, addressed "Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Well-being in North America."

We are also pleased to note Canada's successful hosting of World Environment Day on June 5, 2017, and its timely theme of "Connecting People to Nature." In recognition of climate impacts on biodiversity, World Environment Day was an important opportunity to encourage citizens across North America and the world to experience the outdoors, celebrate our shared environment, and consider the important links between healthy ecosystems, biodiversity and our well-being.

Council appreciates your recommendations that the CEC continue to strengthen our collaborative efforts to investigate the links between climate change and biodiversity. We agree with your assessment that the CEC is unique in its ability to facilitate trilateral cooperation on important environmental issues in North America. Your advice is particularly timely as we look to implement the 2017-2018 Operational Plan.

We commend your efforts to engage with the North American public and to bring their concerns and perspectives to our attention. We look forward to working with the JPAC, the TEK Roster of Experts, and the CEC Secretariat to find ways of incorporating this advice into the work of the CEC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Isabelle Bérard', written in black ink.

Isabelle Bérard
Alternate Representative for Canada

cc. Enrique Lendo, Alternate Representative for Mexico
Jane Nishida, Alternate Representative for the United States
César Chavez, CEC Executive Director
Marcela Orozco, JPAC Liaison Officer