



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 12 2017

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

Office of  
International and  
Tribal Affairs

Dear Mr. Varney:

On behalf of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), I would like to thank the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) for your advice to Council No: 17-02 highlighting outputs from the JPAC Public Forum "Reducing and Managing Food and Organic Waste Streams: Challenges and Opportunities in North America," held in Tuxtla, Mexico, in March 2017.

We agree that food and organic waste is a pressing North American challenge and that addressing it presents an opportunity to address its food security, sustainability, economic, and biodiversity impacts. We also agree that tackling this issue requires innovative partnerships with state and local communities, the food supply, chain, the private sector, and even consumers. We further believe in capitalizing on synergies with experts and organizations beyond North America to leverage resources and maximize results.

Our current CEC project on *Measuring and Mitigating Food Loss and Waste* is focused on measuring food loss and waste in the North American food chain, calculating its environmental and socioeconomic impacts, and providing tools and education to prevent and reduce losses and their impacts on food security, the economy, and the environment. We anticipate the outputs of this project to help develop and inform partnerships for actions and the national and state levels as well to inform opportunities for collaboration beyond North America.

Our trilateral cooperation under this CEC Food Waste Project has reinforced the respective commitments of the three countries to addressing food waste prevention, recovery and recycling. The U.S. continues efforts supporting a multi-stakeholder response to achieving a national goal to cut food loss and waste in the U.S. by half by 2030, in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12's Target. Canada is moving forward with its national food strategy that will incorporate food waste reduction objectives, and Mexico has also been pursuing new inter-ministerial efforts to address food loss and waste, including through continuing work with The World Bank.

Developing standard terminology regarding food products labeling is increasingly recognized as an area needing greater attention, with action now underway along several fronts—in government, the private sector and the research community. In the U.S., the growing attention to

the food waste issue has resulted in a more direct engagement by the Food and Drug Administration in cooperation with EPA and USDA on the topic, and related legislation has been introduced in Congress. Researchers are providing compelling justifications for the cost effectiveness and importance of acting, and the private sector, through its industry associations, is moving forward with voluntary actions to address confusions about “date labelling” aimed at reducing food waste. The trilateral work of this project is providing a mechanism to extend these findings, lessons and proposed actions among stakeholders across all three countries.

We are also very pleased with the engagement and leadership of North American Youth. Through the 2017 Youth Innovation Challenge at our Council Session in Prince Edward Island, we awarded two teams addressing food waste. One team is transforming food that would otherwise be wasted into a food source for the food insecure. The other team is working to convert food waste into biogas and electricity at the location of the waste.

Furthermore, our CEC projects on *Conserving Shorebirds through Community Engagement* and *Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Conservation* also address issues relevant in the interrelation between food production, habitats and biodiversity.

The Council sincerely appreciates JPAC’s efforts to engage with the North American public and to bring their concerns and perspectives to our attention. We anticipate that our domestic work, the outputs and outcomes from the three North American projects described here, our efforts to network and engage with other international organizations and experts, and our vision to engage states and the private and education sectors, will advance informed strategies and collaboration to address food loss and waste. We look forward to working with the JPAC, the TEK Expert Group, and the Secretariat to find ways of incorporating this advice into the work of the CEC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Nishida". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" being more prominent than the last name "Nishida".

Jane Nishida

Alternate Representative for the United States

cc:

Isabelle Bérard, Alternate Representative for Canada

Enrique Lendo, Alternate Representative for Mexico

César Chavez, CEC Executive Director

Marcela Orozco, JPAC Liaison Officer