



**Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) Activity Report
to the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)
since July 2014**

This table is intended to provide Council with an overview of JPAC activities since the July 2014 Regular Session of Council to assist discussions during the annual joint Council/JPAC sessions in July 2015.

Please note that JPAC activities have been undertaken 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 with Article 16(5), which provides that JPAC “may provide relevant technical, scientific or other information to the Secretariat, including for purposes of developing a factual record under Article 15. The Secretariat shall forward to the Council copies of any such information.”

Please note the internal Council policy for producing responses to JPAC advice states that a response should be sent out **“within eight weeks of receiving the advice.”**

JPAC Activity and Context	Description	Status or Result
Advice to Council No: 14-02 Re: Outputs from the JPAC Public Forum in Yellowknife (July 2014) on “Transboundary Natural Resource Management: Meeting Challenges through Cooperation and Participation across Borders” <i>(Distributed on 17 October 2014)</i>	JPAC Advice to Council 14-02 outlined opportunities to successfully manage transboundary natural resources, particularly through cooperative actions and participation across borders. It included a number of observations and recommendations, as well as specific input from invited experts and participants who attended the meeting. Among these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC should continue and expand its work on water and watershed issues as an integral part of its next strategic plan. • CEC resources should be devoted to strengthening and disseminating scientific understanding of water and watershed conservation and management issues, as well as broader public participation in water and water resources and watershed decision-making. • The CEC can play a unique role in identifying local solutions and disseminating them at a regional level, and in engaging officials and experts who can navigate the complexities of different land management systems. • The CEC can also build on existing local partnerships (government agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations) with 	In their response letter, Council commended JPAC for hosting a very successful meeting and for incorporating a diverse range of perspectives into its proceedings. Council underlined the importance of managing transboundary natural resources for the three governments, and noted that the work accomplished through the CEC benefitted their trilateral efforts. In addition, the Council applauded JPAC’s work in encouraging information sharing among the Parties and various stakeholder groups on this important issue. Council stated that in selecting projects for the OP 2015–2016 for the CEC, they were committed to putting more resources toward water issues while maintaining respect for the current binational agreements. This will include improving blue carbon data, mapping, and approaches to reducing carbon emissions as well as efforts to preserve marine protected areas. As part of the 2015–2016 OP, the Council committed to a continued

	<p>scientific expertise and strong ties to the region in order to promote collaboration, strengthen regional responses to climate change, and support the alignment of regulatory standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAAEC Parties should recognize the intellectual resource of Traditional Ecological Knowledge at the same time that they respect its heritage. CEC programs should be developed with these dual concerns in mind. • During the meeting with the Council, JPAC presented brief interventions on: (a) the need to involve JPAC as an integral part of developing the next strategic plan; (b) the importance of restoring JPAC's full budget; (c) concerns regarding the integrity of the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process and the independence of the Secretariat as it responds to and investigates submissions. 	<p>focus on community perspectives by including Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems as a strategic priority. One new initiative under this same priority is the expansion of the Local Environmental Observer Network. In addition, TEK experts would provide indigenous peoples' approach to our trilateral efforts.</p> <p>Council stated that the Parties appreciate the value JPAC brings to the CEC Operational and Strategic planning process and that they look forward to engaging JPAC as they develop and finalize the 2015–2016 Operational Plan and 2015–2020 Strategic Plan. Additionally, they recognized the importance of a healthy budget for JPAC.</p> <p><i>(Response received on 9 January 2015)</i></p>
<p>Joint Public Advisory Committee Regular Session 14-03 “North America’s Coasts in a Changing Climate” 6–7 November 2014, Arlington, Virginia</p>	<p>The forum brought together scientists, regional leaders, policy experts, non-governmental organizations and members of the public; to discuss issues, challenges and opportunities, for developing strategies to address the effects of climate change on coastal ecosystems.</p> <p>In particular, participants were tasked with identifying opportunities for communities to enhance and restore coastal ecosystems, as they face the current and future effects of extreme weather events, coastal erosion, and rapid development.</p>	<p>As a result of the meeting, the members agreed to provide the Council with an Advice:</p> <p>Advice 14-03: Re: Results and Recommendations from the JPAC Workshop (November 2014) in Arlington, Virginia, on “North America’s Coasts in a Changing Climate”</p>
<p>Advice to Council No: 14-03 Re: Results and Recommendations from the JPAC Workshop (November 2014) in Arlington, Virginia, on “North America’s Coasts in a Changing Climate” <i>(Distributed on 19 December 2014)</i></p>	<p>JPAC Advice to Council 14-03 outlined a series of opportunities for collaboration, as well as initiatives, that the three countries could develop, or to which they could add value, under the CEC’s 2015–2016 Operational Plan and 2015–2020 Strategic Plan. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC has a unique ability to 	<p>The Council commended JPAC for conducting a workshop that gathered a range of North America’s blue carbon experts for a robust examination of the importance of our coastal communities and ecosystems. They expressed appreciation for the detailed and thorough observations</p>

	<p>convoke relevant decision-makers, experts, and constituents throughout the region. It can thus facilitate regional collaboration and coordination, as well as a broader dissemination of knowledge to the public of the importance of coastal wetlands in the mitigation of climate change impacts through carbon sequestration and storage. JPAC recommends that Council continue to make the Blue Carbon project a high priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its Blue Carbon project, the CEC should continue to give priority to training and educating relevant constituencies in the importance of restoring and conserving those coastal wetlands through outreach, community engagement, and media strategies. • Engaging local communities in meaningful ways around conservation and restoration projects is an essential component of the success of such projects. This can include calculating and communicating the benefits of healthy coastal and upland wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as other critical ecosystem services. • The CEC should prioritize efforts to review legal and regulatory frameworks so that the Parties can strengthen and harmonize their regulatory approaches to blue carbon, where appropriate. • Indigenous communities in coastal areas will be among the most vulnerable to climate impacts on coastal wetlands because of their distinctive connection with nature and with coastal ecosystems. Efforts should be made to develop greater understanding of this connection and better understand and integrate indigenous knowledge of conservation practices and the potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Efforts should be made to develop greater 	<p>and recommendations submitted by JPAC, which would be shared with the CEC Blue Carbon Working Group.</p> <p>The Council noted that they will consider the findings and recommendations that emerged from the Arlington Workshop and will continue to align efforts through the CEC, to augment collaboration among science, policy, and community level actors, working to protect and preserve coastal communities. Better alignment of policies and practices among our three countries remains an important objective, and they will continue to look for opportunities to move in that direction. Council will also continue to count on JPAC and the CEC Secretariat to support the Parties in taking steps towards greater knowledge sharing.</p> <p>The Parties also recognized that indigenous communities are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, because of their intrinsic connection with nature and the cultural significance of living from the land. As a result, the Council is considering two new projects under the 2015–2016 Operational Plan to focus on: 1) expanding the Local Environmental Observer network in indigenous communities across North America and 2) using ecosystem function on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) together to build resilience and adapt to climate change in North America.</p>
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	<p>understanding of the connection between indigenous communities in coastal areas with nature and coastal ecosystems, and to better understand and integrate indigenous knowledge of conservation practices and the potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	
<p>Joint Public Advisory Committee Private Working Session, 12–13 January 2015 Montreal, Quebec</p>	<p>The JPAC members met with the CEC Executive Director, the Canadian Alternate Representative, Secretariat program staff, Legal Officers from the SEM Unit, the Director Administration, and the CEC communications team.</p>	<p>The JPAC members defined their priorities for 2015 and established their working groups and plans for the year, including outlining their schedule/topics for their public meetings.</p> <p>They also met with the Canadian Alternate Representative, who was invited to present the proposed projects under the 2015–2016 Operational Plan, and to provide a status update on the development of the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan and on the establishment of roster of TEK roster of experts.</p> <p>CEC Program Managers reported on project conclusion under the 2013–2014 Operational Plan. The CEC Director of Administration provided an overview of the JPAC budget for 2015 as well as a detailed expense report for 2014.</p> <p>JPAC also met with staff from the CEC Communications and Information Services unit, to exchange views on a JPAC communications plan for 2015, and with the SEM Unit Legal Officers.</p>
<p>Session 15-01, with the Alternate Representatives, 17 February 2015 (<i>Conference Call</i>)</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair, Gustavo Alanís-Ortega, participated in a conference call with the Alternate Representatives, that centered on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approval of outstanding projects under the 2015–2016 OP for transmission to JPAC and for public consultation; • Approval of the revised 2015 	<p>On the draft OP 2015–2016, the JPAC Chair indicated that as soon as the translations of the project descriptions were finalized, the public consultation would be launched for a period of 30 days, and would be followed promptly by an Advice to Council.</p>

	<p>budget;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the revised draft of the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan; and • Other issues (Responses to JPAC Advice, Roster of TEK experts, upcoming JPAC meeting, and the next face-to-face meeting) 	<p>The JPAC Chair also noted that they were looking forward to reviewing the draft 2015–2020 Strategic Plan, to which the Alt Reps suggested that a copy of the current version be shared with JPAC for their comments.</p> <p>The JPAC Chair also provided an update on the planning efforts for their meeting “Green Growth and Sustainable Competitiveness in North America” to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, on 23–24 April 2015. He noted that an agenda was currently being developed by the working group, and would be circulated shortly. He also mentioned that the JPAC working group for the Boston meeting in July was waiting to hear Council’s theme for this year’s session, in order to align the topics of the JPAC public forum on 14 July. Lastly, he informed the Alt Reps that the last session of the year, would take place in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on 5–6 November 2015.</p>
<p>Session 15-02 of the Alternate Representatives, 31 March 2015, Washington, DC</p>	<p>Representing JPAC Chair Gustavo Alanís-Ortega, Robert Varney attended the face-to-face Alt Reps meeting, which had as its main objectives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the draft agenda and proposed program for the Council Session 2015 and provide guidance on moving forward; • Provide comments on the latest draft of the Strategic Plan 2015–2020, and agree on next steps; • To discuss the re-allocation of the \$135K, currently unallocated under CEC projects; • Create a well-defined and distinct structure to guide the functions that the Roster of TEK experts is to serve; and • Consider whether the SEM public outreach strategy and the CEC policy on increasing the public accessibility of factual records should be presented to the Council 	<p>The Alt Reps agreed they needed to provide a copy of the draft SP2015–2020 to JPAC in advance of their meeting in Monterrey, Mexico, on 23–24 April 2015. They tasked the GSC with integrating the changes they had proposed. The Alt Reps also agreed they might need to further refine the Strategic Plan 2015–2020 after they receive comments from JPAC.</p> <p>The JPAC representative noted that TEK had been discussed during their recent JPAC meetings in Oaxaca and Yellowknife, and that a list of TEK experts had been assembled for these meetings. He recognized that a well-thought-out roster comprising individuals with this expertise, could provide a broader perspective. He noted however, that TEK is only one</p>

	<p>for approval at the Regular Session in Boston.</p>	<p>piece of the larger environmental puzzle.</p> <p>He also suggested that JPAC could hold an annual conference call with the entire roster, to stimulate a group discussion and obtain a broader and more strategic perspective on TEK-related matters and/or emerging trends. Council agreed that as JPAC finalizes its Advice to Council on the OP2015–2016 projects, it would seek input from the selected experts on the TEK roster regarding TEK-related projects in the OP.</p> <p>The Alt Reps also agreed to allocate resources in the 2015–2016 JPAC budget, with the expectation that it will be used to support the TEK experts’ participation in JPAC deliberations.</p> <p>The JPAC representative reported that the public consultation had ended and that 18 comments were received from the public on the OP2015–2016 projects. These would be forwarded to the JPAC subcommittee working on the OP2015–2016, and an Advice to Council would be transmitted at the end of April.</p> <p>Regarding their July session, the JPAC representative indicated that the committee normally tries to identify a topic that is complementary to the Council theme. He confirmed that the theme for this year’s meeting was broad enough that JPAC could identify a related topic. He invited suggestions from the Parties regarding speakers and topics.</p> <p>The JPAC representative also reported that an Advice to Council stemming from JPAC’s January working session was being finalized and would be transmitted in the</p>
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		coming weeks. He then brought up the upcoming JPAC meeting in Monterrey, which would consider the topic of “Green Growth and Sustainable Competitiveness in North America,” and provided a status update on the agenda. He also noted that Secretary Guerra had recently confirmed his participation.
US NAC and GAC Meeting 16 April 2015, Washington, DC	<p>In representation of the JPAC Chair Gustavo Alanís-Ortega, Robert Varney provided a report on JPAC activities since the last US NAC and GAC meeting, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JPAC Advice to Council 14-03: Results and Recommendations from the JPAC Workshop (November 2014) in Arlington, Virginia, on “North America’s Coasts in a Changing Climate”; • JPAC Private Working Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, 12–13 January 2015; • JPAC participation in the Alt Rep conference call that was held on 17 February 2015; • The JPAC-led public consultation on the draft projects under the 2015–2016 Operational Plan; • JPAC participation in the face-to-face session of the Alternate Representatives, that was held in Washington, DC, on 31 March 2015; • The JPAC Regular Session: “Green Growth and Sustainable Competitiveness in North America” to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, on the 23–24 April 2015; • Responses from Council to JPAC Advices 14-02, 14-03; and • The JPAC Regular Session in Boston on 14–15 July 2015. 	<i>Ongoing</i>
Joint Public Advisory Committee Regular Session 15-01 “Green Growth and Sustainable Competitiveness in North America” 23–24 April 2015, Monterrey, Nuevo León	<p>The main objective of the JPAC public forum held at this Regular Session was to share lessons and best practices on the management of energy, water and waste in North America.</p>	<p>As a result of the meeting, the members agreed to provide the Council with an Advice:</p> <p>Advice to Council No: 15-03 Re: Advice and recommendations</p>

	<p>With the overall goal of providing recommendations; the JPAC members, invited experts, and stakeholders explored the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Energy and Climate Change: The Role of Renewables and Emerging Technologies • Water and Climate Change: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources 	<p>from the JPAC Workshop (April 2015) in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, on “Green Growth and Sustainable Competitiveness in North America”</p>
<p>Advice to Council No: 15-01 Re: JPAC-led Public Consultation on the 2015–2016 Operational Plan <i>(Distributed on 4 May 2015)</i></p>	<p>Having conducted a public consultation on the proposed projects under the CEC 2015–2016 Operational Plan, JPAC members submitted a series of recommendations and observations for Council's consideration, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comments on the cooperative work proposed; • Specific comments on the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ North American Initiative on Food Waste Reduction and Recovery; ○ North American Initiative on Organic Waste Diversion and Processing; ○ North American Blue Carbon: Next Steps in Science for Policy; ○ Reducing Emissions from Goods Movement via Maritime Transportation in North America – Phase II; ○ Enhancing North American Enforcement of IMO Maritime Fuel Sulfur Limits; ○ Accelerating Adoption of ISO 50001 and Superior Energy Performance (SEP) Program Certifications in North America; ○ Strengthening Conservation and Sustainable Production of Selected CITES' Appendix II Species in North America; ○ Greening of Chemicals Management in North America; ○ Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative—Americas Flyway Action Plan; 	<p><i>No response to date</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engaging Farmers and Other Landowners to Support Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Conservation; ○ Monarch Butterfly Flyway: Communication, Participatory Conservation, and Education Programs Throughout the Migratory Route; ○ Local Environmental Observer Network; and ○ Marine Protected Areas: Strengthening Management Effectiveness and Supporting Coastal Community Resilience. 	
Advice to Council No: 15-02 Re: JPAC Advice and Recommendations Regarding Submissions on Enforcement Matters <i>(Distributed on 13 May 2015)</i>	<p>With the overall commitment of assuring the strength, integrity, and credibility of the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process, JPAC members provided Council with advice and recommendations on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pending Proceedings; • Information Gathering; • Limiting the Scope of Factual Records; and • Requests for Response from Council. 	<i>No response to date</i>
Letter to Council Re: Draft CEC Strategic Plan 2015–2020 <i>(Distributed on 7 May 2015)</i>	<p>The members of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) shared with Council their thoughts on the draft CEC Strategic Plan 2015–2020 that was provided to them for their review and commentary. Their feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for the plan to describe how the organization will reach its goals and objectives, as well as measure its accomplishments. A possible path forward could be to review the progress achieved on an annual basis, and make modifications to address emerging issues, as appropriate. JPAC could play a role in this assessment through its public engagement efforts. • Include urban initiatives under the “Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems” priority, given it’s a new area of focus for the CEC, with 	<i>No response to date</i>

	<p>enormous potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly mention collaboration with the private sector and new partners, since both can play a proactive role in finding solutions to the problems that are currently being faced in our region. • Revising the section on “Public Outreach, Stakeholder Engagement and Communications,” since the activities mentioned within the document seem very broad and do not differ from what has been done up to now. This could include concrete actions, as well as innovative ideas on how we plan to reach our communications goals. 	
<p>Advice to Council No: 15-03 Re: Advice and recommendations from the JPAC Workshop (April 2015) in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, on “Green Growth and Sustainable Competitiveness in North America” <i>(Distributed on 25 May 2015)</i></p>	<p>As a result of the discussions during the JPAC meeting that was held in Monterrey, Mexico, JPAC members agreed to provide an Advice to Council, which included recommendations from invited experts and members of the public. Among these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of managing water resources more effectively, by involving water management institutions in our three countries. • Encourage the development and implementation of a clean energy policy to achieve sustainability in North America. • The CEC should take the lead in promoting water cooperation and strategic alliances among key decision makers, experts, and other constituents to gain focus on renewable resources. 	<p><i>No response to date</i></p>
<p>Session 15-03 Alternate Representatives 28 May 2015 <i>(Conference Call)</i></p>	<p>The JPAC Chair, Gustavo Alanís-Ortega, participated in a conference call with the Alternate Representatives, which focused on bringing closure on decisions already taken by the Alt Reps on all issues and documents associated with the 2015 Council Session, including the full TEK Roster along with the TEK Terms of Operation, and the structure of the Council Session Agenda.</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair confirmed that he would be sharing with the Alt Reps in the coming weeks the topics that will be raised by the members during the joint JPAC and Council in-camera session. He also suggested they consider assigning additional time for the discussion between JPAC and the Council, for which the Alt Reps agreed to adjust the total time allotted for interaction to 60 minutes.</p>

		<p>The JPAC Chair also confirmed that the topic of their public forum on 14 July would be: “Water and Climate Change: Adaptation through Green Infrastructure.” He provided a quick overview of the format for the meeting and expressed confidence that the session would complement the Council’s discussion on the following day.</p> <p>The JPAC Chair also asked for more information on the Roster of TEK experts, particularly their role, the nature of their relationship with JPAC, how the interaction will take place, what type of advice is expected from them and how often, etc. The Alt Reps suggested that a separate call between the GSC and the JPAC members take place to respond to these questions. They also agreed to share the information on the TEK experts with JPAC, including their terms of operation.</p>
Conference Call with the GSC 17 June 2015	As suggested by the Alt Reps, the JPAC Chair met via conference call with the GSC representatives, to seek additional information on the terms of operation of the TEK experts.	<i>Ongoing</i>