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The AWA strongly supports the work that the CEC has done on grasslands and biodiversity and encourages ongoing work in this area. We support the "approach that supports biodiversity and local communities in the grassland region by sharing best management practices to sustain biodiversity and improve economic performance of local communities." This region (grasslands) supports some of the highest concentrations of species at risk in North America and globally is considered a top priority ecosystem. The work from Canada to Mexico in this region needs to be supported and enhanced.

We would caution the CEC in modernizing the Citizen Submission process and ensure stakeholders from the public are involved in any reshaping here. The biggest barriers to success have been in the responses from government not in the submission process itself. The staff of CEC has usually done a good job of sorting through the frivolous requests and identifying key issues. The submission process itself is relatively simple although the information gathering by staff can be cumbersome at times.

We appreciate the limited resources that CEC has to work with and hope that some additional resources would be made available by the Council for the staff to do their work. Hence, we are reluctant to suggest additional areas to explore with such limited resources available. Future areas for growth could be in exploring models of citizen enforcement of environmental laws across the three countries and perhaps in other countries as well.

We and our associated organizations see a continuing need for the CEC and its public engagement work, perhaps now more than ever.