

# Sierra Club of BC

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To: Gustavo Alanís-Ortega  
JPAC Chair for 2003

## **RE: Maintaining support for the North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation**

I was disturbed to learn about the current situation facing North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC) in which the CEC Secretariat's suggested to conclude the NAFEC.

I am responding to this notification to lend support and encouragement for continuing this very important and critical Fund. We here at the Sierra Club Canada, BC Chapter have greatly benefited in the past from the support received from NAFEC. I also know that other entities of the Sierra Club as well as numerous other environmental organizations have also benefited from this support.

Many environmental organization are facing a very difficult period in that they are faced with declining funding and resources from foundations, corporations and government programs. This is occurring at a time when there continues to be mounting environmental concerns on many fronts in North America. This program has proven that it has been greatly successful and has had a positive wide scale impact and includes:

- Succeeded to address the cooperation part of the North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC)
- Succeeded to promote the capacity building of community groups;
- Provided the CEC with a North American public constituency;
- Reported a wide variety of positive effects and impacts in a short time;
- Facilitated information exchange among North American community-based organizations;
- Promoted public participation within the CEC by encouraging grantees to take an active role in CEC activities; and
- Benefited from positive local media coverage.

I strongly urge the Secretariat to explore other options for meeting our budgetary challenges, for example, addressing the large number of meetings, the travel expenses of government officials covered through the CEC budget and the large number of printed reports. With today's

technology much of this can be done using virtual and electronic based mediums such as internet, teleconferencing and email. It is more important to put the support where it is critically needed and where it has shown proven results such as the above mentioned track record. By empowering these groups, many who have a major volunteer component, you are able to reach a broad constituency and people "on the ground" working towards sustainable and environmentally conscious development.

Please allow NAFEC to remain a part of the CEC's program and to continue its function of supporting community groups.