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1. I won't dwell on the past. Given very limited resources and strict control by the three governments, I think the CEC has not done badly.
2. Looking ahead, however, significant changes must be made:
 - a. CEC (or some follow-on body) must be more independent and gain access to greater resources. It is time for a group of North American environmental leaders to propose how to do this to the three national governments.
 - b. The main reason is that environmental issues – particularly climate change – will become more and more urgent in the next years. Climate change does not stop at the 49th parallel or the Rio Grande – the CEC.mark2 (or a successor organization) must look at these issues with a continental perspective – not three side-by-side national perspectives. Similarly it must be much more aggressive with work on energy and transportation infrastructure – again, in a continental perspective.
 - c. The organization must work harder to develop networks among North American environmental organizations but also universities – and in professional schools (transportation, journalism, etc) as well.
3. Finally, what should be a fairly simple task that could be done without a major restructuring of the Council: Many reports on all aspects of environmental issues cross our desks. But many (most) look at these issues from a national perspective. Many would have significantly greater value if the work were framed in comparative perspective – and achieve a much greater bang for the buck. For example:

Each year, as mandated by the Global Change Research Act, the US Global Change Research Program, produces a “National Climate Assessment”, a report to inform the President, the Congress, and the American people about the current state of scientific knowledge regarding climate change effects on US regions and key sectors, now and in the coming decades (<http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment>). The National Research Council, with members drawn from the councils of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine, has issued an evaluation of this report. The review asks “Are there any critical content areas missing from the report?”

One element of the response states: “There is a clear need for more international context in the discussion of energy use and mitigation efforts, and in understanding U.S. vulnerabilities that stem from impacts occurring elsewhere in the world.” (A Review of the Draft 2013 National Climate Assessment, http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18322, p. 15) There is no sense that climate change in the US might (must?) be viewed in the context of the impact of climate change on the North American continent or to suggest that this investigation ought to be carried out jointly by the three North American governments.

Here's another, from the US DOE:

U.S. ENERGY SECTOR VULNERABILITIES TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER Given the increasingly continental structure of our energy industries, wouldn't this be much more useful if it looked at this in a North American framework? More negatively, what's the value of doing this in an entirely US framework?

<http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2013/07/f2/20130710-Energy-Sector-Vulnerabilities-Report.pdf>

One more: “A Road Map to Climate Friendly Cars”: This comprehensive state-by-state analysis of the climate impacts of the electric car, plug-in hybrid electrics, and high-mileage, gas-powered hybrid cars takes both of these factors into account – the source of energy for the power grid and carbon emissions from vehicle manufacturing. Why not add Mexican states and Canadian provinces to this analysis? http://assets.climatecentral.org/pdfs/ClimateFriendlyCarsReport_Final.pdf

Could the CEC help create a network among directors of research organizations in the three countries to communicate about up-coming projects and to encourage comparative analysis?

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