

XXVI

Council Session
Sesión de Consejo
Session du Conseil

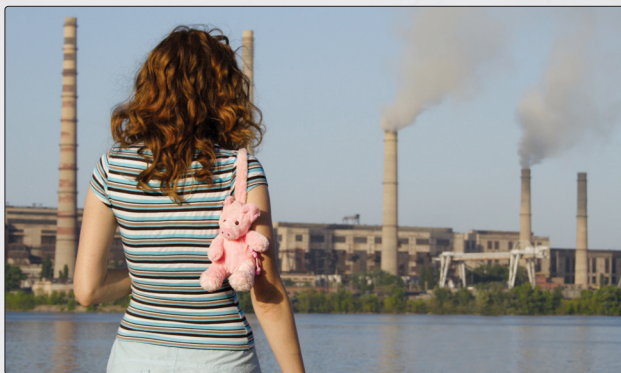


25 YEARS

of the
Commission for
Environmental
Cooperation

Mexico City – 24 June, 2019

The Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) Process



The SEM process provides a unique tool for North American residents and NGOs to use in assuring effective enforcement of environmental law in North America.

The process promotes transparency and information-sharing and has been a successful mechanism to ensure government accountability and improvements to environmental conditions.

More than **300** stakeholders and community groups have raised their voices to the CEC through **96** submissions involving over **40** environmental laws, and resulting in **24** factual records.

Some of the most significant submissions and factual records over these 25 years have been:

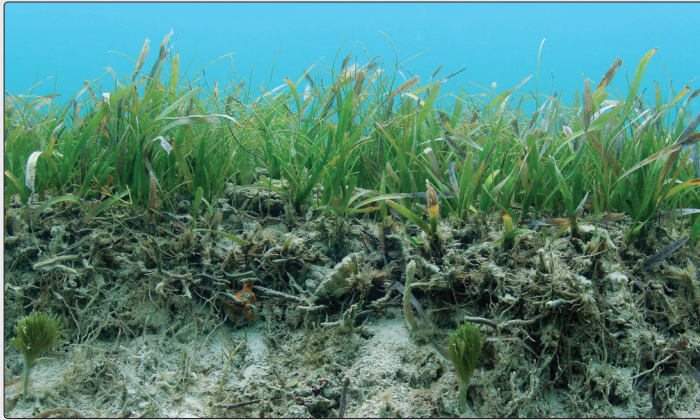
- **Cozumel** (Mexico, 1997)
- **BC Hydro** (Canada, 2000)
- **Metales y Derivados** (Mexico, 2002)
- **Ontario Logging** (Canada, 2006)
- **Montreal Technoparc** (Canada, 2008)
- **Lake Chapala II** (Mexico, 2013)
- **Coal-fired Power Plants** (United States, 2014)
- **Sumidero Canyon II** (Mexico, 2015)
- **Alberta Tailings Ponds** (Canada, 2019)

Independent Reports



- **Death of Migratory Birds at the Silva Reservoir (1995).** The report on the mass mortality of migratory waterfowl resulted in a cooperative capacity-building program, with technical assistance from the Government of Quebec.
- **Continental Pollutant Pathways (1997).** This report highlighted critical issues concerning the long-range transport of air pollutants in North America.
- **Agenda for Preserving Transboundary Migratory Bird Habitat / Upper San Pedro River (1999).** This transboundary study examined the preservation and enhancement of habitat corridors in the states of Arizona and Sonora.
- **Environmental Challenges and Opportunities of the Evolving North American Electricity Market (2002).** The environmental implications of electricity deregulation and of expanded transboundary trade in electricity.
- **Maize and Biodiversity / The Effects of Transgenic Maize in Mexico: Key Findings and Recommendations (2004).** This study examined the implications of gene flow from genetically modified corn into Mexican corn.
- **Green Building in North America: Opportunities and Challenges (2008).** The report presents decision-makers with a trilateral plan for improving the environmental performance of the building sector.
- **Destination Sustainability: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Freight Transportation in North America (2011).** The report recommends actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improving energy efficiency of the transportation sector.
- **Hazardous Trade? An Examination of US-generated Spent Lead-Acid Battery Exports and Secondary Lead Recycling in Canada, Mexico, and the United States (2013).** This report examines the transborder movement and recycling of spent lead-acid batteries (SLABs).

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation



The CEC:

- ✓ Increased the capacity of communities to monitor health outcomes related to extreme heat events. Sonora was the first state in Mexico to establish a system to monitor heat-related illnesses.
- ✓ Helped environmental protection agencies improve estimates of black carbon emissions.
- ✓ Compiled information on food waste reduction and organic waste diversion and processing, including barriers, opportunities and strategies.
- ✓ Mapped and assessed blue carbon habitats (seagrass, saltmarshes and mangroves) to better determine their role in carbon cycling. Resulted in the first continent-wide blue carbon habitat maps.
- ✓ Helped increase the resilience of marine protected areas (MPAs) by developing vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning tools.
- ✓ Developed carbon budget models to better manage forests for greenhouse gas mitigation.
- ✓ Developed guidelines and tools to improve emission estimates and comparability of climate pollutants.

Ecosystems



The CEC:

- ✓ Supported the conservation of grasslands ecosystem services through better management practices on ranches using native grassland.
- ✓ Expanded the Local Environmental Observer (LEO) network to enhance the capacity of communities to share local environmental observations.
- ✓ Supported collaboration on marine protected area management through the creation of the North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN). Initial efforts include the identification of marine priority conservation areas from Baja California to the Bering Sea.
- ✓ Supported habitat conservation along the monarch butterfly migratory flyway through coordinated outreach and engagement activities, and research support.
- ✓ Engaged communities in shorebird habitat conservation along coastal flyways to share experience and best practices for community-based conservation.
- ✓ Worked to build community-based solutions for preventing and reducing marine litter.
- ✓ Developed North American Conservation Action Plans (NACAPs) to protect species of common conservation concern: the humpback whale, pink-footed shearwater, leatherback turtle, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, black-tailed prairie dog, the *Vaquita* marina porpoise, and the iconic monarch butterfly.
- ✓ Harmonized the classification of terrestrial and marine ecological regions.

Pollutants



The CEC:

- ✓ Worked with Mexico on its efforts to establish an Emission Control Area to reduce emissions from maritime transportation.
- ✓ Implemented the AirNow-International system in Mexico, a consistent set of tools to manage, share and publicly disseminate information on air quality conditions for locations across the three countries.
- ✓ Worked to improve indoor air quality in homes of Indigenous communities to improve the respiratory health of children.
- ✓ Published reports on best practices to support the environmentally sound management of batteries from conventional, hybrid and electric vehicles.
- ✓ Promoted cooperation toward adopting mandatory and comparable Pollutant Releases and Transfer Registers (PRTs) in North America. This ongoing effort was key in establishing Mexico's *Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes*. Flagship products: *Taking Stock* report and Taking Stock Online database.
- ✓ Developed North American Regional Action Plans (NARAPs) to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals. These contributed to the elimination of chlordane and DDT in North America.

Green Economy



The CEC:

- ✓ Developed a practical guide and a technical report to measure food loss and waste across the food supply chain.
- ✓ Produced a Food Matters Action Kit that inspires youth to take action to prevent, recover, and recycle food waste in their homes, schools, and communities.
- ✓ Conducted research and launched action plans to support sustainable trade in selected CITES Appendix II species of tarantulas, parrots, turtles and tortoises, timber, and sharks.
- ✓ Cooperated with the private sector in the implementation of energy-saving standards in manufacturing through training on ISO 50001.
- ✓ Provided comprehensive information to help reduce the environmental impact of the building sector.
- ✓ Worked on reducing air pollution from the transportation sector at land-based ports of entry.
- ✓ Supported the creation of the Mexican Alianza Verde Automotriz branch of the North American Suppliers Partnership to establish an alliance of auto manufacturers, collaborating and championing sustainable practices in the auto supply chain.
- ✓ Supported the development of ecological criteria for shade-grown coffee farming.
- ✓ Developed a mechanism to provide loans to small and medium-size businesses for implementing pollution prevention strategies, in partnership with the Council of Mexican Industrial Chambers.

Public Participation



- ✓ Public and stakeholder engagement is at the heart of the CEC's origins and central to its work.
- ✓ The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) represents various sectors of society and is the main institutional channel for public participation, providing stakeholders with access to information on environmental issues in North America and the work of the CEC.
- ✓ JPAC has sponsored and facilitated numerous public meetings on topics identified as priorities by the public, and fostered a sustained and informed dialogue with the Council.
- ✓ JPAC's 123 Letters of Advice to the Council have provided meaningful recommendations that influenced and strengthened the CEC's policies and projects with additional perspectives, highlighting emerging issues, increasing opportunities for collaboration, and expanding the CEC network with other stakeholders.
- ✓ The creation of the TEK expert group, composed of Indigenous representatives, strengthened the participation of Indigenous groups in CEC activities, and provided the opportunity to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in CEC initiatives.
- ✓ JPAC has been instrumental in advancing the following:
 - Modernizing the SEM process;
 - Setting a Communications Strategy for the CEC;
 - Increasing Indigenous engagement;
 - Leading public consultations on CEC Strategic and Operational Plans;
 - Contributing to the 10- and 20 -year reviews of the CEC; and
 - Assessing the impact of the CEC in light of the renegotiation of NAFTA.
- ✓ The CEC has also included strong public participation components across many of its projects and initiatives under the cooperative work program.

CEC Grants



The CEC recognizes the important role played by communities in contributing to a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship for the environment across North America. CEC grants have been awarded to a diverse set of community-based, innovative projects that engage citizens in hands-on activities, build partnerships and develop approaches that are replicable across the region, and promote the goals and objectives of the CEC.

- 267 grants giving C\$14.2 million in funding, through these programs:

North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC, 1996-2003); Grantees reported a wide variety of results and impacts, including changes to policies, creation of networks, protection of endangered species and many others. Most of the effects reported are in areas related to green goods and services, conservation of biodiversity, pollutants and health, and environmental education.

North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA, 2011-2018); Grantees reported that funded projects contributed to building community capacity, improving health and environmental quality, developing sustainable economic models, implementing strategies for sustainable development, strengthening environmental education, biodiversity conservation, expanding green building practices, as well as community adaptation measures.

Cooperative Work on Environmental Law and Policy



- ✓ The CEC has more than 20 years of collaboration conducting training activities and maintaining online training platforms to increase the capacity of environmental, wildlife, and customs officials to identify illegal shipments of environmentally regulated materials, such as ozone-depleting materials, hazardous waste, and endangered species of wildlife.

The CEC:

- ✓ Published the Crossing the Border report that outlines opportunities and challenges to improve tracking of hazardous waste shipments across the North American borders.
- ✓ Supported the creation of the North American Wildlife Enforcement Group (NAWEG) to provide a forum for trilateral cooperation in wildlife enforcement.
- ✓ Helped enhance or harmonize policy and supported capacity building for regulatory enforcement of, and compliance with, environmental law.



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