



August 9, 2001

Liette Vasseur
JPAC Chair

Dear Ms. Vasseur:

Thank you for submitting the information provided by the *Colectivo Ecologisco Jalisco*, the *Instituto de Derecho Ambiental* and the *Sociedad Amigos del Lago de Chapala* regarding water quality concerns along with the continuing decline of water levels in Lake Chapala, Jalisco (letter of July 9, 2001). Like yourself and other JPAC members, I noted the sense of urgency expressed by residents of the basin as well as by the depth of their concern and commitment to finding solutions. We were pleased to see Secretary Lichtinger acknowledge the importance of taking action to protect Lake Chapala, and look forward to seeing how Mexico will undertake a comprehensive examination of the entire Chapala watershed and river system.

As you know, in Guadalajara the Council members entertained a full discussion of water-related issues and, for the first time, has agreed to undertake collaborative work in this area, including the potential development of a North American framework for sustainable use and conservation of water. The Council was particularly interested in water pricing and technologies. At present, the Secretariat is exploring a means of initiating work in this area next year, and will soon present to the Parties, JPAC and public a draft program of work. This, of course, will supplement information we can provide at the North American scale, provided such an approach is feasible. Additionally, the CEC will employ OECD's recently-developed key environmental indicators and could develop a special chapter providing a more in-depth look at water related issues, which could include the Chapala watershed as well.

For a number of years now JPAC has advised the CEC to include water-related issues in its program. The Council has now agreed, and we look forward to working closely with JPAC to ensure that CEC efforts add value to Canadian, Mexican and U.S. policy development in this area.

Sincerely,

Janine Ferretti
Executive Director

cc. Alternate Representatives
Colectivo Ecologista Jalisco
Instituto de Derecho Ambiental
Sociedad Amigos del Lago de Chapala