



**ADVICE TO COUNCIL: NO. 99-05**

**Re: Expanding the Involvement of the North American Public, including Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation**

The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in its Report to Council at the last Regular Session of Council in Mérida, 24–26 June 1998, noted that JPAC intended to provide guidance to Council on how improve and expand involvement of the public, including indigenous peoples in the work of the CEC.

As anticipated in its CEC 1999 Work Plan, JPAC held a Regular Session in Anchorage, Alaska, 8 May 1999, following a joint public meeting held with the Sound Management of Chemicals Working Group on 7 May 1999, where specific efforts were made to seek the views of indigenous peoples from our three countries on how to better involve them in the work of the CEC.

As a result of these dynamic and informative sessions, JPAC is convinced that the input of indigenous peoples within the CEC is both necessary and valuable. JPAC also recognizes the need to better involve other groups whose access to the CEC process has been similarly limited. JPAC is of the opinion, however, that the input of indigenous peoples is particularly critical and should be the subject of focus for the CEC.

JPAC, therefore:

ENCOURAGES Council to continue emphasizing the need for refining and strengthening capacity building efforts within the CEC programs in order expand the involvement of the North American public including indigenous peoples;

RECOGNIZES that the National Advisory Committees (NACs) provide an entry point for the public and that this link should be further developed for indigenous peoples; and

WILL BE DEVELOPING a proposal for Council's consideration at the 27–29 June 1999 Session specifically related to the involvement of indigenous peoples in the CEC Program Plan and activities.

**APPROVED BY THE JPAC MEMBERS**

18 May 1999