

7 May 2015

Louise Métivier
Assistant Deputy Minister, Canada

Enrique Lendo Fuentes
Titular de la Unidad Coordinadora de Asuntos Internacionales, Mexico

Jane Nishida
Acting Assistant Administrator, United States

Dear Alternate Representatives:

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) to share our thoughts on the draft CEC Strategic Plan 2015–2020 that was recently given to us for our review and commentary. Let me begin by saying that, overall, the document is consistent and seems to address, in broad terms, the goals and objectives that have been set out under each strategic priority and cross-cutting theme. We have, however, a number of comments that we would like to put forward for your consideration.

While the Operational Plans lay out the implementation and timeline of the work to be carried out under each project, we note that the draft Strategic Plan does not describe how it will reach its goals and objectives, nor how it will measure its accomplishments. We see that the version provided to us has a section on organizational performance, which will perhaps respond to this particular comment, but we definitely feel there should be a clear, measurable path forward. During our discussions in Monterrey, many of us felt the Strategic Plan needed to be more like a living document; therefore, we recommend that Council consider reviewing the plan on an annual basis, specifically, the progress achieved, and make the modifications that may be necessary to address emerging issues. JPAC would be happy to play a role in this assessment, through its public engagement efforts, should Council consider it appropriate.

Under the priorities, beginning with “Green Growth,” there is quite a bit of emphasis on the reduction of greenhouse gases and emissions, and less on recycling and reduction of waste, and under “Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems,” there is no specific mention of urban initiatives, a new area of focus for the CEC with enormous potential for the three countries. We also note that any reference to private sector engagement, as well as to engaging other new partners, is notably absent from both of these priorities. We recommend that both of these priorities explicitly mention collaboration with private sector, as well as involvement of new partners, since both can play a proactive role in finding solutions to the problems that are currently being faced.

Regarding the cross-cutting theme section, specifically “enhancing the alignment of environmental regulatory standards, enforcement and compliance,” we feel that in addition to “collaborating on enhancing the enforcement of environmental laws through aligning



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environmental regulatory standards,” the SEM process should be mentioned, particularly since it is the mechanism under the NAAEC that was designed to enhance enforcement in our three countries. Furthermore, we note the SEM process is mentioned under the NAPECA section, and not on its own. We feel that the process has been, for the most part, visible to members of the public in the three countries, and we are unclear as to the meaning of the sentence “advance public understanding of the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process,” given the outreach efforts that have been pursued by the Secretariat in recent months.

In terms of “Public Outreach, Stakeholder Engagement and Communications,” we agree that efforts to increase public awareness of the organization’s accomplishments are warranted, and that the CEC needs to broaden and improve its strategic communications efforts. However, the activities mentioned within the document seem very broad and do not differ from what has been done up to now, which, in our opinion, has not been effective. For example, many of the experts and participants who attend our events were previously unaware of the existence of the organization, as well as of the important work the CEC does in our three countries. We also feel that in order for the CEC to be better known across North America, it needs to have a presence at international events, particularly those that deal with the work that we will be undertaking over the next five years. We understand that there are financial restraints; however, efforts should be made to build this into part of the current budget without compromising the work, and seek potential partnerships with the private sector or academic institutions. We recommend that this section be revised to include concrete actions as well as innovative ideas on how we plan to reach our communication goals. JPAC can certainly play a role in attaining these objectives and plans on working closely with Secretariat communications staff to enhance public engagement in all of our activities.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to provide recommendations on how to strengthen and promote the important work of the CEC. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Gustavo Alanís-Ortega
JPAC Chair for 2015

cc JPAC Members
Irasema Coronado, CEC Executive Director