



**Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) Activity Report
to the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)
since July 2013**

This table is intended to provide Council with an overview of JPAC activities since the July 2013 Regular Session of Council to assist discussions during the annual joint Council/JPAC sessions in July 2014.

Please note that JPAC activities have been undertaken in accordance with Article 16(4) of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), which states that JPAC “may provide advice to Council on any matter within the scope of this agreement [...] and on the implementation and further elaboration of this agreement, and may perform such other functions as the Council may direct”; and with Article 16(5), which provides that JPAC “may provide relevant technical, scientific or other information to the Secretariat, including for purposes of developing a factual record under Article 15. The Secretariat shall forward to the Council copies of any such information.”

Please note the internal Council policy for producing responses to JPAC advice states that a response should be sent out **“within eight weeks of receiving the advice.”**

JPAC Activity and Context	Description	Status or Result
Advice to Council No: 13-03 Re: JPAC-led Public Consultation on the 2013–2014 Operational Plan <i>(Distributed on 27 June 2013)</i>	JPAC expressed its appreciation to see that all but one of the projects it had endorsed had been considered for the 2013–2014 Operational Plan. They encouraged Council to consider revisiting the Reducing North American Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Power Generation proposed project, as well as work in this important area, for the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan.	Council replied that the Operational Plan had been developed in a new way, allowing for early feedback to the Working Groups. Council added that it was pleased to see that JPAC’s Advice 13-03, built on consultations with the public, which largely aligns with, and endorses the activities, outlined in the draft 2013–2014 Operation Plan.
	They also noted that several projects under the Climate Change–Low-carbon Economy and Greening the Economy in North America priorities, did not contain a green energy component, and noted that work on solar and wind power generation technologies could prove highly beneficial for the three countries, especially for isolated communities.	Council welcomed JPAC’s recommendation to review the project on Greening Transportation at North American Land Ports of Entry. The views of stakeholders, such as the trucking industry, corridor associations and border communities would be considered as suggested.
	They also underlined the lack of emphasis on ecosystem health themes, despite having been recognized by the three countries as essential for human health, and suggested the CEC work on fragmentation of ecosystems, which is so closely linked to transportation—among other causes—and continues to be one of the main causes for biodiversity loss.	In response to JPAC’s overall comments, Council replied that the Parties would give consideration to the recommendations that were provided as they move forward in the development of the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan. <i>(Response received on 26 July 2013)</i>

	<p>In terms of performance measurement, JPAC felt some of the descriptions were fairly clear in describing the main outcomes, others less so. JPAC recommended a more homogeneous approach for measuring success in all projects.</p> <p>They also provided specific feedback on the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North American Collaboration for Conservation of Transboundary Protected Areas • Enhancing Environmental Law Enforcement in North America • Improving Indoor Air Quality to Reduce Exposure to Airborne Contaminants in Alaska Native Populations and Other Indigenous Communities in North America • North American AirNow-International Project • North America's Blue Carbon: Assessing the Role of Coastal Habitats in the Continent's Carbon Budget • Integrated Modeling and Assessment of North American Forest Carbon Dynamics and Climate Change Mitigation Options • Improving Conditions for Green Building Construction in North America • North American Online, Interactive Informational Platform on Climate Change • Greening Transportation at North American Land Ports of Entry (POEs) <p>JPAC members also welcomed the opportunity to engage closely with the working groups in the implementation of the projects.</p>	
<p>Joint Public Advisory Committee Regular Session 13-03 “20 Years of NAFTA and the NAAEC” 17-18 October 2013, Washington, DC</p>	<p>January 2014 will mark 20 years since NAFTA and its environmental side agreement, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), went into effect. To mark this important</p>	<p>As a result of the meeting, the members agreed to provide the Council with an Advice:</p> <p>Advice 13-04: Re: Reflections and Recommendations Regarding the</p>

	<p>milestone, and with a view to providing constructive input for future CEC plans, JPAC hosted a one-and-a-half day conference to discuss the results of a JPAC-led public review on the topic, and to hear firsthand from a select group of key actors, who played a crucial role during the negotiations.</p>	<p>20th Anniversary of NAFTA and the NAAEC</p>
<p>Letter to Council Re: CEC Budget, 20-Year Anniversary and JPAC Membership (Distributed on 30 October 2013)</p>	<p>Following their meeting in Washington DC, JPAC members agreed to write a letter to Council expressing concern over the CEC's budgetary situation, opportunities for joint collaboration to commemorate the 20 year anniversary of the CEC and the outstanding JPAC appointments.</p> <p>Regarding the reduction of resources in the 2013 budget, JPAC conveyed understanding of the existing economic pressures that the three governments faced, but explained that any reduction would make it increasingly difficult for the Secretariat and JPAC to conduct their mandates. JPAC members requested that Council reinstate the funding to its original amount of \$9 million.</p> <p>JPAC members also referred to a possible intersessional meeting in January 2014, and expressed their interest in meeting with Council members to provide an update on JPAC's plans, and discuss ways to enhance collaboration to mark the CEC's 20th anniversary.</p> <p>Lastly, JPAC reiterated the importance of having a full membership, and urged all three countries to fill the vacancies as soon as possible.</p>	<p>With respect to the budgetary situation, Council referred to the resolution signed in July 2013 in Los Cabos, Mexico, confirming the CEC budget would be maintained at \$9 million per year over the next two years. They also noted that they had provided guidance to the CEC Executive Director to maintain the annual budget at \$9 million, by increased administrative and operating efficiencies and drawing upon the organization's nearly \$2.5 million surplus. Council further explained that while the decision to reduce funding was not taken lightly, it was driven by fiscal adjustments and the Parties' shared commitment of equal contributions to funding the CEC.</p> <p>As for JPAC membership, the US recently announced its new members and Canada and Mexico were actively engaged in identifying new candidates.</p> <p>Finally, the three Parties, with the support of the JPAC and the Secretariat, would begin developing the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan, and the parties looked forward to working cooperatively and productively with the JPAC on this initiative.</p> <p><i>(Response received on 7 April 2014)</i></p>
<p>Session 13-04 of the Alternate Representatives 5 November 2013 (Conference Call)</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair, David Angus, participated in a conference call with the Alternate Representatives, which had as a main objective to discuss and</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair pointed to the letter to Council of 30 October 2013 and reiterated JPAC's concern regarding the contraction of the</p>

	<p>agree on potential deliverables for the intersessional meeting planned for January 2014.</p> <p>The proposed deliverables included an announcement of the dates and location of the 2014 Council Session, the launch of the 20th anniversary celebrations, the announcement of NAPECA grantees, and the SEM outreach plan.</p>	<p>CEC's budget in the long-term. He indicated that JPAC was requesting that the CEC budget be stabilized at \$9 million. He also mentioned JPAC's desire to meet with the Council in the context of the intersessional meeting, as this would present an opportunity to get direction on what is expected from JPAC in the context of the 20-year anniversary of the NAAEC. He also reminded the Alt Reps of the need to ensure full membership on JPAC as there were now only 9 appointees.</p> <p>Lastly, he reported on the JPAC meeting in Washington, DC on 17–18 October 2013. He indicated that to date 58 submissions had been received from citizens in the three countries, and that the two-day workshop was useful in pointing to successes (particularly a validation of the CEC as a model for regional cooperation) as well as improvements that may be valuable. He indicated that a summary report was being prepared and an advice to the Council would be issued as a result of the workshop.</p>
<p>Advice to Council No: 13-04 Re: Reflections and Recommendations Regarding the 20th Anniversary of NAFTA and the NAAEC <i>(Distributed on 6 December 2013)</i></p>	<p>To mark the 20th anniversary of NAFTA and the NAAEC, JPAC conducted a public review that involved preparing background information, inviting the public to provide input in writing and holding a public meeting in Washington, DC. The main purpose for the Advice was to provide constructive input regarding the future of the CEC, and the challenges and opportunities it faces at this landmark moment.</p> <p>The Advice highlighted some of the CEC's most notable contributions, including how it has fostered regional understanding and cooperation on environmental issues, in addition to promoting transparency and openness to public participation.</p>	<p><i>No response to date</i></p>

	<p>It also provided a series of recommendations which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for renewed engagement by the Council members, but also, critically, across government sectors, including trade and environment officials. • The importance of finding creative ways to effectively convey the value of the information the CEC has generated to date as well as future work, for a wide range of actors, including businesses, academia, indigenous peoples, and local governments and communities. • Ensuring strong participation of all relevant stakeholders, along with government officials. The CEC should also deepen its relationships with provinces, states and municipalities, since they are often motors of innovation and are at the frontlines of most environmental issues. • Public participation in the internal operations of the CEC should be broadened. • The CEC should look towards new goals and tasks, targeted to the priorities of the next twenty years. These priorities could include, among others, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate change ▪ Transportation and energy ▪ Water ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Investment and subsidies ▪ Cumulative and transboundary environmental ▪ Focused trade and environment issues ▪ North America's ecological footprint • The CEC should ensure the meaningful and permanent involvement and consideration of indigenous peoples. • The need to focus on measuring results and outcomes, which is increasingly important for governments, the public and many 	
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	<p>stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order for the organization to accomplish its mandate, the CEC's budget should urgently be increased to at least US\$14–15 million yearly, bringing it to its original level in real terms. 	
<p>US NAC and GAC Meeting 17 December 2013, Washington, DC</p>	<p>JPAC Chair David Angus provided a report on JPAC activities since the last US NAC & GAC meeting, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JPAC Regular Session 13-01 in Calgary: Greening North America's Energy Economy; • JPAC call for information and comments on the first 20 years of NAFTA and the NAAEC; • JPAC Advice to Council 13-03: JPAC-led Public Consultation on the 2013–2014 Operational Plan; • JPAC Round Table Discussions: Sustainable Transportation in North America, held in Los Cabos, Baja California, on 9–11 July 2013; • JPAC Regular Session 13-03; • JPAC Advice 13-04 Re: Reflections and Recommendations Regarding the 20th Anniversary of NAFTA and the NAAEC; • Council's response to JPAC Advice 13-01, 13-02 and 13-03; • Council letter on 19 June 2013, informing JPAC of its decision to implement cost-saving measures; and • The status of the election of the new JPAC Chair from among the US contingent. 	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>
<p>Session 14-01 Alternate Representatives, 8 April 2014 (<i>Conference Call</i>)</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair, Robert Varney, participated in a conference call with the Alternate Representatives that centered on discussing the 2014 Council Session, update from the 20th anniversary Task Force and SEM issues.</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair provided an overview of the Agenda for the upcoming JPAC meeting in Oaxaca, including the four topics relating to building healthy and sustainable homes in remote communities. He mentioned that Secretary Guerra would likely be joining the event and encouraged the Parties to send their government representatives to participate and</p>

		<p>highlight the work of each of the three countries in addressing these issues.</p> <p>He thanked the Alt Reps for their response concerning JPAC membership and indicated that JPAC looked forward to receiving a response to its Advice 13-04 (<i>Reflections and Recommendations Regarding the 20th Anniversary of NAFTA and the NAAEC</i>). He mentioned that JPAC understood fiscal realities, although recognizing that for the organization to be strong, proper funding was needed. He pointed to measures undertaken by JPAC to reach out to the public through electronic and web-based means and mentioned that different outreach tools would need to be considered. Finally, he indicated that JPAC would be discussing that same week the topic for its meeting in Yellowknife.</p>
<p>NAC & GAC meeting 10 April 2014, Washington DC</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair, Robert Varney, provided a report on JPAC activities since the last US NAC & GAC meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JPAC efforts on the 20th Anniversary of the CEC in 2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A call for Information and Comments ○ A series of Backgrounders on the work of the CEC over the last 20 years ○ A JPAC meeting in Washington DC on October 17-18 ○ A final report and JPAC Advice to Council • JPAC Meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico on 12–13 May, focused on addressing the barriers to the development of healthy, sustainable homes in remote communities in North America, with a special focus on indigenous communities. • JPAC letter to the Alternate Representatives requesting suggestions on experts/speakers for 	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>

	<p>one of its sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council response to JPAC’s letter regarding the reduction of the CEC budget, as well as the outstanding JPAC member appointments. • Status update on the planning efforts for the JPAC Regular Session in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. 	
<p>Session 14-02 of the Alternate Representatives meeting, 30 April 2014, Washington, DC</p>	<p>JPAC Chair, Robert Varney, participated in the face-to-face meeting, which had as main objective to discuss and endorse the CEC priorities for 2015–2020 Strategic Plan and the 2014 Council Agenda.</p>	<p>The JPAC Chair said that, in his experience, the CEC had contributed to enormous accomplishments through cooperation, specifically on ensuring comparable data for modeling emissions and working on mercury issues. He agreed on the importance of better describing the good work, and commented that identifying the value added and the measurable outcomes will place the countries in a better position to achieve the goals they share.</p> <p>The JPAC Chair confirmed that members were still discussing the topic for the JPAC meeting on 16 July, but that indigenous peoples and traditional ecological knowledge was being considered as a topic.</p> <p>Concerning the joint Council and JPAC meeting, he mentioned that JPAC members would be confirming the issues they would like to discuss with the Council in the next few weeks.</p>
<p>Joint Public Advisory Committee Regular Session 14-01 “Building Healthy and Sustainable Homes in Remote Communities: A Focus on Indigenous Communities in North America,” Oaxaca, Mexico, 12–13 May 2014</p>	<p>Barriers to the development of healthy, sustainable homes remain a major concern for a number of remote communities in North America, as well as many indigenous communities. The main objective of the JPAC public forum was to discuss opportunities and challenges faced by Canada, Mexico and the United States.</p> <p>With the overall goal of providing recommendations, the JPAC members,</p>	<p>As a result of the meeting, the members agreed to provide the Council with an Advice:</p> <p>Advice 14-01: Re: Outputs from the JPAC Workshop in Oaxaca (May 2014) on Building Healthy and Sustainable Homes in Remote Communities</p>

	<p>invited experts, and stakeholders explored the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air, energy and water: securing high quality and affordable resources in remote communities; • Barriers that limit the access to healthy and affordable homes and resources in remote communities; • Protecting communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and • Financing for residential green building projects (new construction and retrofits) in remote communities. 	
<p>Advice to Council No: 14-01 Re: Outputs from the JPAC Workshop in Oaxaca (May 2014) on Building Healthy and Sustainable Homes in Remote Communities <i>(Distributed on 26 June 2014)</i></p>	<p>JPAC Advice 14-01 included a number of recommendations and observations for Council's consideration, as well as specific input from invited experts and participants that attended the meeting (Appendices A and B).</p> <p>The Advice outlines opportunities for building healthy and sustainable housing in remote communities, particularly in indigenous communities. These opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking an integral approach to promoting healthy and sustainable housing, which should include the consideration of water availability, conservation, and responsible use, as well as the identification and management of risks to water availability and quality; • Addressing misperceptions about the relative costs and benefits of investing in energy-conserving building methods, materials, and technologies when financing and building affordable housing; • Promoting greater awareness among relevant public authorities and constituencies about the importance and long-term value of sustainable and energy-conserving building methods, materials, and technologies that can and should be deployed in the context of affordable housing; • Encouraging greater coordination at 	<p><i>No response to date</i></p>

	<p>a regional level to strengthen existing networks and to promote greater understanding of, information about, and technology sharing for, sustainable and energy-conserving building methods, materials, and technologies in North America; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing that climate change has brought about, and will increasingly call for, the need for adaptation efforts. <p>JPAC noted the two-year 2013–2014 CEC Operational Plan has yielded progress in these areas, and noted the public dialogue held in Oaxaca helped advance broader public awareness regarding how best to pursue these opportunities and overcome obstacles.</p> <p>JPAC recommended that the CEC continue its work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing a more integrated concept of sustainable housing. This could include, for example, supporting regional strategies for outreach, incentives, and financing to promote green building, as well as strategies for exchanging technologies and best practices for sustainable production, use, and disposal of construction materials. • Emphasizing the substantial long-term savings that investments in energy- and water-efficient housing can bring relative to initial costs through: • Supplying public authorities and constituencies with relevant information; and • Providing opportunities for relevant actors to build and strengthen networks throughout North America. • Identifying energy and water risk areas and opportunities for adaptation. 	
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