



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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Teresa A. Pardo, PhD., Chair
National Advisory Committee
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Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Dear Dr. Pardo:

Thank you for the National Advisory Committee's (NAC) letter of advice of January 16, 2017, reporting on our forty-seventh meeting held in Washington, D.C. on November 16-17, 2016. Our discussion at the meeting on current and potential environmental matters under the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was very valuable. We appreciate the NAC's comprehensive advice to the Council on potential directions in the areas of marine litter and food waste, and the opportunities they offer to implement a path forward on tangible initiatives for youth engagement in these areas. This advice will serve EPA well in working with our counterparts in Mexico and Canada to prepare for the next CEC operational plan.

NAC Recommendations on Marine Litter:

1. Positioning is Key
2. Partnerships are Key
3. Build Deep Understanding of the Sources of Marine Litter
4. Surface the Facts About Which Actions Create What Value in Which Contexts
5. Enable the Necessary Infrastructure to Manage the Sources
6. Build Awareness: Simplify, Customize and Amplify the Message

We agree that addressing marine litter presents challenges and opportunities on pollution prevention and legacy cleanup. To that end, communities, industry and other stakeholders should be well-informed to understand the connection between marine litter and the ecological, human health and economic impacts, both at the local and global levels. As well, we agree that federal, state, local and tribal communities, industry, and non-governmental organizations should have the necessary tools and information, and knowledge to develop key partnerships to develop and apply solutions to the marine litter issues. Increasing the capability of communities and other stakeholders to make strategic choices about which actions produce the most value in specific context is a key principle in EPA's Trash Free Waters (TFW) program. For example, our TFW program collaborated with the Product Stewardship Institute, and the University of California on a Marine Debris & Plastic Source Reduction Toolkit for Colleges & Universities. The Campus Toolkit is a detailed guide for reducing plastic waste on college campuses and other

institutions that includes a Footprint Calculator to determine a campus' "plastic footprint"; a source reduction plan to eliminate the use of disposable plastic items; and, help for changing campus purchasing practices by switching to greener, lower-waste products, and establishing campus-wide plastic waste reduction policies. Enabling necessary governance and infrastructure is also important to developing and implementing high impact solutions. Finally, amplifying the message can help make a difference in engaging various stakeholders at all levels, including youth, to develop and implement solutions.

NAC Recommendations on Food Waste:

1. Positioning is Key
2. Partnerships are Key
3. Build Deep Understanding of the Sources of Food Waste
4. Surface the Facts About Which Actions Create What Value in Which Contexts
5. Enable the Necessary Infrastructure to Manage the Sources
6. Build Awareness: Simplify, Customize and Amplify the Message

We agree that food waste has linkages to environment and public health issues, use of natural resources, social issues and food security. Enabling partnerships with communities, schools, academia and industry to build awareness and promote actions is a key component of finding and implementing solutions. Understanding the food system and the major causes or sectors producing food waste will inform strategies to address major source points. Increasing the capability of communities, policy makers and other stakeholders to make strategic choices about which actions produce the most value in specific context is key to achieving results. Enabling necessary governance and infrastructure is also important to developing and implementing effective solutions. Last December, EPA, the Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture partnered with 10 private sector and non-profit organizations to create "Further With Food: Center for Food Loss and Waste Solutions," an online hub for the exchange of information and solutions that can help realize the national goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030. Further With Food provides comprehensive information about food loss and waste in the United States and about solutions dedicated to reducing it. This virtual resource center offers a broad spectrum of users – such as businesses, government entities, investors, NGOs, academics, and individuals—a platform to find and share information about proven solutions and innovative new approaches to reduce the volume of surplus food generated, feed hungry people, and divert food and scraps to the highest beneficial use.

In preparation for the new CEC operational plan, experts from Canada, Mexico, and the US are developing project proposals that include marine litter and food waste. The detailed concepts and examples you provided for both marine litter and food waste will greatly help to guide us. We also appreciate the manner in which the role of youth and ideas on how to better engage the youth is woven into these concepts and examples. We look forward to receiving NAC feedback on the proposed projects at our next meeting.

NAC Additional Advice:

1. Modifications of the requirements for NAPECA proposals to encourage more holistic, lifecycle thinking about problems and solutions
2. Revise the NAPECA grant requirements to include specific details in proposals on the significance of the actions locally, as well as globally.
3. On expansion of food waste programs to include food waste in the field; and
4. On expanding CEC's mission statement to include "conserve and protect" to more fully reflect CEC's strategic priorities for sustainable communities and ecosystems

As you may be aware, the CEC is undergoing an evaluation of the NAPECA grants and what this grant program has achieved in the last few rounds of grants. This evaluation is expected to enable the CEC parties to improve the design of this program, including making modifications to encourage stronger environmental outcomes. These recommendations will be helpful as we consider the kinds of modifications that will be necessary to achieve this.

We will carefully consider your additional recommendation on food waste and the CEC mission statement with our CEC partners in Mexico and Canada.

NAC requests:

1. Update on the progress of CEC youth engagement programs, including indigenous youth
2. Update on the progress of the TEK expert group

We are happy to update the NAC on the incremental progress that is being achieved with youth engagement and the TEK expert group.

We look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen the cooperation among the United States, Canada, and Mexico on trade and environment matters through the trilateral CEC.

Sincerely,



Jane Nishida
Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of
International and Tribal Affairs
U.S. Alternative Representative