

U.S. National Advisory Committee
*Independent Federal Advisors on the
North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation*

January 16, 2017

**Committee
Members**

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New York

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The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) to the U.S. Representative to the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) held its forty-seventh meeting in Washington, D.C. on November 16-17, 2016. On behalf of the members of the NAC I wish to thank you for your commitment to advancing the mission and strategies of the CEC and for the opportunity to provide our advice on these important matters.

The NAC wishes to express its thanks also to the EPA team for their organization and support of our work. This meeting was unique in that a high percentage of the members of the NAC were attending their first meeting. The extra attention provided to help new members orient to the role and work of the NAC contributed to the ability of the members to quickly understand where and how our work fits into the overall efforts of the CEC and the EPA.

The meeting began with Office of International and Tribal Affairs Acting Assistant Administrator Jane Nishida providing a review of the CEC governance structure and roles of the Council, Alt Reps, and Secretariat. She then briefed the members on the content of the Ministerial Statement from the Council Session held at Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, on 9 September 2016. Ms. Nishida also reviewed priorities for the forthcoming two-year Operating Plan, recognizing that a majority of the NAC and GAC members are newly appointed and participating in their first committee meeting. In addition, Senior Advisor for North American Affairs Sylvia Correa also offered valuable insight throughout the meeting.

The meeting agenda included a series of presentations and updates on key issues and prior activities. Some updates were requested in previous NAC meetings. Two presentations in particular provided background material in support of the NAC charge questions. The two presenters from EPA graciously took questions from the members and engaged in a discussion on critical issues related to the charge questions. The list below provides a

Simone Sagovac
Michigan

Ivonne Santiago
Texas

summary of the agenda and presents some brief comments from the NAC.

- JoAnn Chase, Director, American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO), provided members with a briefing on the milestone interagency MOU for coordination and protection of treaty rights. Ms. Chase also stated that the Eco Ambassadors program was running well and the Local Environmental Observers program is expanding. The NAC wishes to express our appreciation for Director Chase's dedication and limitless optimism for progress in the area of federal-tribal relations.
- Donna Vizian, EPA Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Administration and Resources Management, welcomed the members and reviewed the responsibilities of FACA appointees, and thanked the members for their advice and the OARM staff for their support of our efforts.
- César Rafael Chávez, Executive Director of the CEC Secretariat (via teleconference), provided an update of programmatic progress under the Operation Plan and the current round of NAPECA grants.
- The NAC and GAC had previously requested a briefing on the status of the Monarch Butterfly, which was provided by Donita Cotter of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service.
- An update on the status of SEM submissions was offered by Robert Moyer, SEM Director at the CEC, with support from Lisa Goldman from the EPA Office of General Counsel.
- Lindsay Brumwell, JPAC Chair, reported via telephone, on the recent JPAC session in Ottawa, and alerted the committees to the forthcoming joint JPAC-TEK Roster advice. She also noted that their recent session was streamed via Facebook Live and they had 3,000 attendees through that service.
- Stephanie Adrian, representing the Office of Global Affairs and Policy at OITA gave an excellent briefing on marine litter, and Ted MacDonald from the same office provided comprehensive overview of the challenges of food waste management.
- TEK Roster member Gail Small provided a briefing, by telephone, on the progress of the Roster as they settle into their advisory role and also summarized how TEK is gradually becoming part of the CEC's broader deliberations on the future of the North American environment.

The NAC wishes to express appreciation for the excellent support provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Management Division (FACMD) and thank Director Monisha Harris, NAC/GAC Designated Federal Officer Oscar Carrillo, and all of the FACMD staff for their support, before, during and after the meeting.

The Members of the NAC wish to express a statement of support to the EPA regarding the role and work of the NAC and the GAC. As stakeholders in the work of the EPA and the CEC, we recognize the public value created by these entities, and in particular, the role the two committees play in that value creation process; as such, we encourage the EPA to take action that will contribute to the strength and continuity of the committees.

On behalf of all members of the NAC who had the honor of serving during your tenure we would like to express our deepest appreciation for your principled leadership and unwavering commitment to the preservation and enhancement of our shared environment.

Sincerely,



Theresa A. Pardo, Ph.D., Chair
National Advisory Committee

cc: Jane Nishida, Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs
Monisha Harris, Director, Federal Advisory Committee Management Division
Oscar Carrillo, Designated Federal Officer
Sylvia Correa, Senior Advisor for North American Affairs
Lindsay Brumwell, Chair, Joint Public Advisory Committee
César Rafael Chávez, Executive Director, CEC
Members of the U.S. National and Governmental Advisory Committees

National Advisory Committee (NAC)
To the U.S. Representative to the
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

Advice 2016-1 (Meeting – November 16-17, 2016)
Charge Questions: Marine Litter

The November 2016 Charge Questions to the NAC seek advice “... on potential directions on marine litter and food waste as future areas of work in the CEC’s Operational Plan, and provide advice on implementing a path forward on tangible initiatives for youth engagement, including indigenous youth, on the areas of marine litter and food waste.”

The advice provided by the NAC in response to the Charge Questions is organized into four sections: 1. Marine Litter, 2. Food Waste, 3. Additional Advice, and 4. Requests. Advice related to tangible initiatives for youth engagement, including indigenous youth, is integrated into these sections as appropriate.

Marine Litter

Regarding potential directions on *Marine Litter* as a future area of work in the CEC Operational Plan, the NAC recommends that the CEC consider a set of targeted activities focused on pollution prevention and legacy cleanup. The activities reflect two important themes that ran throughout these discussions: 1. Knowledge of source matters, and, 2. Actions must be locally meaningful and specific to context, while also helping stakeholders see and understand the link between local and global issues and actions. Throughout these recommendations the NAC further recommends a reshaping of the narrative to be more positive; enabling stakeholders to envision a different future. This, they consider, is key to incentivizing engagement and action. The NAC recommendations reflect these themes and are relevant to both focus areas.

1. Positioning is Key

- Economics is key to the solution.
 - The NAC recommends actions which more directly and clearly connect economics to the health of communities, and in particular, marine litter. Use new understanding of sources and impacts of marine litter (see recommendation #3 below) to shape policies that incentivize relevant stakeholders (including private industry, local, state, and national governments, and nongovernmental organizations) to explore the potential relationship between pollution control, legacy cleanup, and value creation. Find the obstacles to efforts to create value out of waste and incentivize the elimination of those obstacles.
- Water quality and watershed management are salient public issues.
 - The NAC recommends actions which more directly link marine litter to salient issues of public interest and concern such as water quality and watershed management. Where marine litter is a threat to safe drinking water, such as in El Paso Texas, engage stakeholders to develop and implement effective solutions.

2. Partnerships are Key

- Build the expectation that partnerships are essential in all areas of pollution control and legacy cleanup.

- Recognize that partnerships are central to the full range of types of activities: research, policy, resourcing, and awareness building, among others.
- Engage in partnerships along a variety of dimensions:
 - With border countries to focus on elimination at the source, where a significant source has been identified. For example, partnering with Mexico on appropriate management of old tires to reduce impacts on water quality.
 - With industry partners at the local, state, federal and international level that have a stake in the issue of marine debris.
 - With state and local governments to incentive and/or remove obstacles to value creation from waste and make other improvements to waste management, particularly in watersheds identified as the most significant sources of marine debris.

3. Build Deep Understanding of the Sources of Marine Litter

- Develop and conduct a bi-annual research project to identify the biggest sources of marine litter.
- Use the results to focus new (research, academic, and community awareness) programs and policies on the sources of marine litter.
- Use the project to make the link between marine litter source and impact on areas of key interest such as water quality and human and animal health.
- Use the baseline data to track the impact of new programs and actions in controlling pollution over time.

4. Surface the Facts about which Actions Create what Value in which Contexts

- Increase capability of communities and other key stakeholders to make strategic choices about which actions generate the most value in specific contexts by creating new understanding of the most cost-effective high impact programs.
 - Develop and conduct a bi-annual research project designed to surface the facts about the value generating effectiveness of the range of actions and activities designed to control marine litter and to cleanup legacy sites.
 - Ensure that policy makers and other key decision makers can determine cost-effectiveness of alternative strategies so that high impact leverage points can be understood and exercised.
- Ensure that citizens and other key stakeholders have readily accessible and usable data about alternative strategies so they can make informed choices. For example, where are youth-based awareness programs most effective in increasing engagement levels in legacy cleanup activities? For example, how can such data be made available on open data portals?
- Examine models in use in other areas and explore the application of lessons learned to pollution control and legacy cleanup of marine litter. Are there lessons from these models that could contribute to new initiatives or actions focused on the elimination of risk of marine litter at the source?

5. Enable the Necessary Infrastructure to Manage the Sources

- Use new data about source and alternative strategies within context to target high impact sites and assist those addressing infrastructure gaps (in the form of policy and facilities) required to mitigate those sites. For example, some Tribal Governments do not have the necessary local regulations to control pollution. They do not have the facilities to support regulated control of pollution or to clean it up. Funding is needed in such communities to build the necessary regulatory and facilities infrastructure required to prevent pollution at the source.

6. Build Awareness: Simplify, Customize and Amplify the Message

- The NAC recommends a variety of actions that EPA could take, consistent with its existing authorities and working in partnership with other stakeholders at the state and local level and in the private sector, focused on simplifying the message, customizing it to context and using amplifiers to get the message out and build awareness of marine litter and the costs in terms of public value at all levels, local, state, federal and global.
- The NAC recommends the use of amplifiers that make messages more accessible. For example, putting messages on outlets frequented by target populations, and not just on PBS. Using new visualizations techniques that reduce the threshold for access to the insights generated through data analysis.
- The NAC recommends the use of source data to engage youth in the development of programs that build new understanding about where a community's waste ends up.
 - For example, a “hackathon” could use data from the bi-annual research project to build visualizations that provide the clearest and most accessible insight about the impact of local actions on marine litter. Prize winning visualizations could form the basis for a youth documentary or a public service announcement program.
 - For example, a community-based competition could incentivize the creation of multi-media displays that simulate the impact of litter on local watersheds over time.

National Advisory Committee (NAC)
To the U.S. Representative to the
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

Advice 2016-2 (Meeting – November 16-17, 2016)
Charge Questions: Food Waste

Food Waste

In consideration of the charge question on food waste, members of the NAC engaged in discussions on food waste and food justice, causes, better understanding of alternative actions, modeling and incentivizing waste reduction strategies, leveraging existing policies and resources, infrastructure challenges, linkages to health, and strategies for engaging schools and affecting curriculum changes. Regarding potential directions on **Food Waste** as a future area of work in the CEC Operational Plan, the NAC recommends that the CEC consider the set of activities listed below.

1. Positioning is Key

- Create programs and actions which directly and clearly identify the connections between food waste and other key social and environmental issues such as food insecurity, food justice, use of natural resources in food production, and a wide range of public health issues. Particular regions may benefit from such linkages more than others, for example, food security is a big issue at the US – Mexico Border. Such a linkage may help attract support for and engagement in food waste initiatives.

2. Partnerships are Key

- Partner with local communities who want support in creating food waste youth engagement programs that meet their unique community character and their specific food waste situation. Such partnerships could help communities build effective and sustainable youth engagement programs that are responsive to local conditions and focused on local food waste issues. And lessons learned can then be shared with other communities. For example, a how-to book, based on the experience in one community, on building a grade school to university partnership program that engages students, teachers, and parents, among others at all levels in food waste programs could provide guidance to others as to how to understand and utilize the levers for change in their own communities
- Enable and support partnerships between community groups, including youth-led initiatives, and super markets for “point of sale” awareness building programs, so when families are buying food they have an understanding of the issue of food waste.
- Enable and support partnerships with the private sector, particularly entities involved in food production/processing, to understand and address food waste at those points.

3. Build Deep Understanding of the Sources of Food Waste

- Develop and conduct a bi-annual research project to identify the sources and causes of food waste. Such studies, including the soon to be released EPA study on barriers and opportunities related to food waste, can provide the data decision makers need to understand where actions might most effectively be focused. For example, how big of a problem are university food systems compared to other food systems? Where on the journey from field, through processing, to the consumer does most food spoilage happen? What strategies might be most effective in reducing food waste?

- Use new data to focus new research, academic, and community awareness programs and policies on the most significant sources of food waste.
- Use the project to make the link between food waste and impact on areas of key interest such as food insecurity and public health.
- Use the baseline data to track the impact of new programs and actions in reducing food waste over time.

4. Surface the Facts about which Actions Create what Value in which Contexts

- Increase capability of communities and other key stakeholders to make strategic choices about which actions generate the most value in specific contexts by creating new understanding of the most cost-effective high impact programs.
 - Develop and conduct a bi-annual research project designed to surface the facts about the value generating effectiveness of the range of actions and activities designed to control food waste.
- Ensure that policy makers and other key decision makers can determine cost-effectiveness of alternative strategies so that high impact leverage points can be understood and exercised. For example, will changes in consumer behavior versus changes in food industry behaviors have the greatest impact? Would a “just ask” program in fast food restaurants which encourages consumers to ask for what they need versus being provided a set amount, have impact beyond other programs which focus on changing consumer behavior? What would it cost an individual consumer to reduce food waste, what would it cost a restaurant, or a boutique coffee shop? What is the value of or utility of linking food subsidies directly to sustainable practices? When choices are required, which choices are best?
- Ensure that citizens and other key stakeholders have readily accessible and usable data about alternative strategies so they can make informed choices. For example, where are youth-based awareness programs most effective in increasing engagement levels in food waste and food justice programs?
- Invest in efforts to make data, analysis, and insights about the value of reducing food waste readily accessible to the intended audiences. For example, make such data available on open data portals.
- Examine models in use in other areas and explore the application of lessons learned to food waste. Are there lessons from these models that could contribute to new models or actions focused on the elimination food waste at the source?

5. Enable the Infrastructure Necessary to Manage the Sources

- The NAC recommends programs that support the creation of the infrastructure necessary to manage the sources of food waste.
 - Use the newly available data about the causes and sources of food waste and the relative impact of programs to support decision making about where new or enhanced infrastructure is needed to support the reduction of food waste. Such research will help inform questions about obstacles to food waste reduction and food security. For example, where will composting programs have the greatest impact? Where will increased access to fresh food make a difference in food waste?
 - Of particular importance to efforts to reduce food waste, are efforts to redistribute food. What is the current state of affairs and what are the obstacles to increasing food security through redistribution programs thereby reducing food waste? What are the obstacles to food security? What are the incentives? Whether the focus is on a small tribal community or an inner city, how can obstacles such as health codes, food safety

concerns and others be overcome? How can we get food from university cafeterias to food banks?

6. Build Awareness: Simplify, Reuse, Customize and Amplify the Message

- The NAC recommends a number of actions focused on using existing and newly acquired data to build *awareness* programs that support the interests of individuals, communities, and other societal and institutional actors to reduce food waste. For example, EPA could support a competition to get universities to reduce food waste through the involvement of their students. Other examples might be EPA's partnership with other stakeholders to enable and support --
 - Awareness programs that leverage what is already available and considered effective such as the Food and Drug Administration's Food Triangle. Use such resources to tie decisions, such as what we should buy and what we should eat every day to the issue of food waste.
 - Awareness programs that inform communities seeking to build and strengthen redistribution programs.
 - Awareness programs that help individual consumers understand where their food originates.
 - Awareness programs that help individual consumers understand their own consumption patterns and new ways of buying based on those patterns. Help them see the impact of their own behavior and help them to understand what to throw away.
 - Awareness programs that provide information about the value of separating trash and effective approaches to changing behaviors.
 - Awareness programs that build understanding of and changes to consumer behaviors around the issue of "ugly produce."
- The NAC recommends actions which directly *incentivize* the engagement of youth in the following ways:
 - Engage youth to engage in food waste related activities by incentivizing universities to compete against one another. Motivate students with prizes to innovate across the disciplines, for example, improve packaging designs, create ad programs, create new evaluation designs to assess impact, create new community and youth engagement models, and new social media strategies, among others. Conduct a Hack on new ways to use leftovers – "how to make something into something."
 - Incentivize "Citizen Scientists" and teachers in the k-12 space by building awareness of school gardens and "trash pick-up" initiatives, among others.
- The NAC recommends actions which leverage existing *curricular* resources including those resources already available at EPA and other key stakeholders. Build awareness of what already exists and amplify it, refine it – don't recreate it. Bring the best of existing resources together and make them available to school systems. For example, many schools have curricular resources that include gardens and trash pickup to complement activities related to these topics.

National Advisory Committee (NAC)
To the U.S. Representative to the
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

Advice 2016-3 (Meeting – November 16-17, 2016)
Charge Questions: Additional Advice & Requests

Additional Advice

The Members of the NAC offer the following additional recommendations for the CEC Operational Plan.

1. The NAC recommends modifications of the requirements for NAPECA proposals to encourage more holistic, lifecycle thinking about problems and solutions. The modification would be in the form of a requirement that all proposals must speak directly to the full lifecycle of the issue and be more specific about how what they are doing impacts the full lifecycle.
2. The NAC recommends revising the NAPECA grant requirements to include specific details in proposals on the significance of the actions locally, as well as globally.
3. The NAC recommends an expansion of food waste programs to include food waste in the field. This unique perspective focuses on management at harvest and maximizing yield.
4. The NAC recommends expanding CEC's mission statement to include "conserve and protect" to more fully reflect CEC's strategic priorities for sustainable communities and ecosystems. The CEC mission of "improve and restore" does not fully account for the range of activities undertaken by and of apparent interest to the CEC.

Requests

1. The NAC requests an update on the progress of CEC youth engagement programs including indigenous youth. How is this program being expanded beyond youth membership in the NAC? How are indigenous youth, in particular, engaging?
2. The NAC requests an update on the progress of the TEK expert group. In particular, the NAC is interested in how to best integrate TEK expertise into the deliberations of the NAC. In a sense, how does the NAC benefit from the thing it helped create?