



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



Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Jeffrey Wennberg, Chair
U.S. Governmental Advisory Committee
VT Department of Environment Conservation
103 South Main St, Building 1 South
Waterbury, VT 05641-0401

Dear Mr. Wennberg,

Thank you for the Governmental Advisory Committee's (GAC) May 30, 2018 letter of advice reporting on our 50th meeting held in Washington, D.C. on April 26 – 27, 2018. We appreciate the GAC's comprehensive advice to the U.S. Representative of the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) on marine litter issues to enhance current trilateral work through the CEC.

We agree with GAC's recommendation on the need to motivate industry and the public to change and create the opportunity for change. Through the CEC projects, the North American Partnership for Community Action and the Youth Innovation Challenge, the CEC is reaching out and creating awareness of the issues and opportunities to act. Domestically, the U.S. government and the EPA, organize and/or participate in several voluntary-based cleanup programs and have published material that identifies best practices to encourage replication of such volunteer efforts. The comprehensive list of local public awareness campaigns and activities provided is a valuable resource as we consider future actions and opportunities on the current CEC work on marine debris.

For example, as resources permit, future work may capitalize on the North American Environmental Atlas to document and promote these successful local actions and their successful statistics as models that can be replicated regionally. These initiatives, like the current CEC project, can capitalize on citizen science and continue to create awareness and drive local actions while gathering valuable information for scientists and policy makers.

The GAC's recommendation to research the pace, effectiveness and replicability of volunteer-based clean up and awareness campaigns, as well as an inventory of methods and measurement of plastic waste management capabilities, could also help inform and showcase successful campaigns and inviting broader participation in North America.

Motivating and engaging industry in the CEC North American context is an ongoing challenge and we also appreciate the key distinction and need for clarity on the term biodegradable. The EPA is currently working through the United Nations Environment Program's expert group on

marine litter, which is specifically looking at definitions such as “biodegradable” and the opportunity for stakeholder input.

We appreciate the GAC’s thoughtful and focused advice relevant to the CEC’s work on marine litter.

Sincerely,



Jane Nishida

U.S. CEC Alternate Representative

