



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

DEC 10 2018

Ms. Sally Ann Gonzales, Chair
U.S. Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)
1700 West Washington Street, Room 116
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2844

Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Dear Ms. Gonzalez:

Thank you for the Government Advisory Committee's (GAC) letter of advice of November 15, 2018, reporting on its 51th meeting held in Tucson, Arizona on October 10-11, 2018. We appreciate the GAC's comprehensive advice to the U.S. CEC Council on actors and capacities related to early warning, preparedness, response and resilience to extreme weather and climate events, focusing on drought/flood, wildfires and extreme temperatures.

Enhancing North American capacities for early warning, preparedness, response and resilience to extreme weather and climate events requires engagement by federal, state, tribal, local, academic, non-governmental organizations and private sector actors on a broad set of disciplines. It is an ambitious endeavor that requires exploring capacities to monitor and predict extreme events at the domestic and regional level on varying time scales; inform and prepare governments, communities and the private sector; and respond and recover.

Our trilateral advisory team¹ has identified initial priorities of North American scale, primarily on monitoring and early warning, including: utilizing volunteer observer networks to address information gaps for predicting and monitoring extreme events; improving local capacity to monitor drought across North America; using satellite imagery for the development of early warning systems; advancing common methodologies for costing floods and other extreme events; and improving capacity to anticipate, prepare, and respond to wildfire, smoke, and extreme heat.

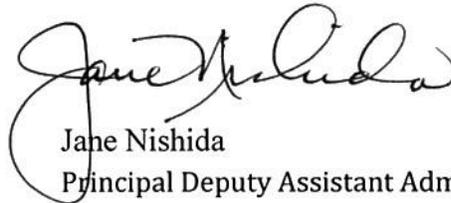
We concur with GAC's advice that response to extreme events requires a tiered approach that involves local, national and even international government alliances. The CEC advisory committee on the extreme events initiative reflects that approach and is composed of multiple federal agencies, academia, tribal representatives and the private sector from the United States, Canada and Mexico. The list of local expert entities in GAC's advice provides opportunities for us to complement the project team with local and tribal experts and actors on the potential mitigation and response components of the project.

Furthermore, GAC's advice is in line with the team's proposed approach and presents opportunities to improve the project concept in several areas:

- The project can facilitate sharing best practices and tools for defining local vulnerabilities to the various extreme events and for prevention and mitigation;
- Potentially enhance the team's proposal to "harmonize" costing the impacts of extreme events in North America to also assess trends over time;
- Explore how federal agencies (already on the team) could incent and partner with local and tribal levels to fill gaps mitigation and response strategies and lead at the local level;
- Enhance and tailor communications to communities and identify reliable communication channels to reach communities.

Thank you for the thoughtful and comprehensive advice and for the commitment from GAC members to help make North American collaboration through the CEC effective and successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Nishida". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "N".

Jane Nishida
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of International & Tribal Affairs