



ADVICE TO COUNCIL NO: 03-04

Re: The Environmentally Sound Management and Tracking of Hazardous Wastes and Hazardous Recyclable Materials

The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America;

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”;

FOLLOWING the Council’s request to JPAC made in June 2003 to provide an advice on the Environmentally Sound Management and Tracking of Hazardous Wastes and Recyclables and based on the CEC public workshop on this issue held on 4 November 2003, in Montreal; and

RECOGNIZING that Council Resolution 03-08 directed the Secretariat to work with the Parties on a variety of initiatives focused on specific hazardous wastes and hazardous recyclable materials and waste of mutual concern to all three Parties;

MAKES the following observations and recommendations:

The CEC Hazardous Waste Task Force has selected spent lead/acid batteries as the priority hazardous waste stream for study. JPAC fully supports this selection with a recommendation to consider the following:

- JPAC understands that an active trade in hazardous waste destined for recycling and disposal exists in North America and it is, therefore, very important to ensure that this trade is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner. However, JPAC also supports the interventions made at the public workshop urging the CEC to focus efforts to work towards the eventual elimination of hazardous wastes—removing the need for the disposal.
- Adopting a life cycle approach will allow the task force to work towards both these objectives. Links with other related CEC activities currently being undertaken should be made, particularly with the Pollutants and Health program regarding pollution prevention, risk assessment, understanding health effects and remediation and with the work of the Environment, Economy and Trade program to shift investment towards greener trade.

- Understanding that 90 percent of hazardous wastes produced in North America remain in North America, there is clearly a need to develop the capacity for our three countries to manage and track these wastes. Building on the guidelines developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and through the Basel Convention, the CEC's work on hazardous waste should focus on developing and implementing a classification, verification and tracking system common to the North American region.
- It is important to recognize that the lack of treatment and disposal infrastructure in Mexico places constraints on the development of a North American system for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes.
- Advancements in electronic tracking technology and methodologies show great promise in achieving this common system for North America allowing officials to track hazardous wastes from "cradle to grave." As work progresses, it will be important to identify specific capacity building needs, including training and infrastructure required for implementing such a system in all three countries.
- Finally, the Council is encouraged to address any regulatory and policy adjustments necessary to maximize timely access by the public to information regarding the movement and final disposal of hazardous wastes.

Approved by JPAC
18 November 2003