



## **ADVICE TO COUNCIL NO: 07-01**

### **Re: “Roundtable on Conservation and Trade”**

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”;

### **RECOGNIZING THAT**

1. Conservation embodies the protection, management for sustainable use and restoration of ecosystem health, biodiversity, ecological processes and ecosystem services.
2. The three basic principles of conservation biology are evolutionary change, dynamic ecology and the human presence.
3. Canada, Mexico and the United States share biological species, communities and eco-regions. Their shared territory constitutes one functioning whole social, economic and ecological system.
4. An open economy of about US\$11 trillion<sup>1</sup> GDP with an excess US\$621 billion of goods and services per year occurring over a shared ecosystem creates a transboundary flow that can affect the environment in a positive and/or negative way.
5. The loss of biodiversity and ecosystem health are among North America’s most serious environmental problems, with potentially huge impacts on our joint economies and society in general. There is an urgent need to have a common strategy addressing environmental issues related to conservation, management, and development.
6. Governments and the public at large need to be better informed about the full costs and consequences of ecosystem degradation and loss.
7. We need to shift from a perception of “abundance” with respect to natural resources, to a reality of “scarcity” where energy, air, land, water and biodiversity are finite and need to be conserved.
8. There is a lack of awareness of the connection between consumer behavior and environmental or natural resource management/use consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: CEC Corporate Presentation 2006

**HAVING** conducted a Roundtable on Conservation and Trade on Tuesday, 7 November 2006, in Cancún, Quintana Roo, which featured sessions with expert speakers from government agencies, nongovernmental organizations and institutions;

**PROVIDES** the following recommendations for consideration by Council:

In terms of the three program priorities, the CEC should:

#### Trade and environment

- Incorporate a holistic vision into its work program for North American eco-regions, transboundary issues and their impact on habitat conservation.
- Document examples where trade has enhanced conservation.
- Document examples where trade has caused environmental degradation.
- Continue to expand projects on environmentally friendly common products, supporting small producers of sustainable products.
- Examine opportunities to improve the consumer behavior and environmental consequences of goods and services that cross our three borders (i.e., to demonstrate the effects of trade).
- Promote fair trade and, as significant purchasers, governments should help to expand markets for best class products.

#### Capacity building

- Promote harmonization of environmental legislation and policy, especially with regards to species at risk.
- Reinforce actions to prevent illegal trade in species in North America.
- Promote research and workshops to define the indicators that reflect the status/loss/increase of biodiversity components.
- Continue working on a regional directory of legal and institutional frameworks for both regulatory and voluntary measures on invasive species.

#### Information for decision making

- Promote sustainability and respect for ecological process through workshops for economists, environmentalists and policy makers to encourage the concept of GPI (Genuine Progress Indicators) as a measure of wealth and sustainable development.
- Raise awareness about the seriousness and urgency of the challenges that biodiversity conservation is facing at a regional scale, such as the Mexico-US border fence.
- Define the economic inducements to or for environmental conservation. Raise awareness of the economic benefits of conservation and disseminate information about successful cases in which conservation has benefited trade, i.e., eco-tourism.
- Undertake a periodic inventory and “state of the environment” report on eco-regions, including watersheds and shorelines.
- Undertake an assessment of natural resources (energy, land, water air) in terms of supply and demand trends.

- Continue to strive for the implementation of an ecoregional conservation plan, promoting activities regarding what constitutes effective integrated trinational conservation plans for biodiversity protection.
- Continue working on the North America Invasive Species Information Network and identifying invasive species and invasion pathways of common concern as well as priorities for bi- and trinational cooperation.
- Integrate traditional knowledge and extend participation of indigenous communities in ecoregional planning.
- Integrate and make public existing databases of common endangered species within North America.
- Develop a directory of organizations and their conservation projects to identify and know who is doing what, where.

**Approved by the JPAC members  
23 May 2007**