



**UNIDAD COORDINADORA DE
ASUNTOS INTERNACIONALES**

**SECRETARIA DE MEDIO AMBIENTE
Y RECURSOS NATURALES**

UCAI/2229/2004

Mexico City, 13 May 2004

**Ms. Donna Tingley
JPAC Chair for 2004
Commission for Environmental Cooperation
393, rue St-Jacques ouest, bureau 200
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 1N9**

Re: JPAC Letter dated 23 October 2003

Dear Ms. Tingley:

On behalf of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and the Alternate Representatives I would like to thank the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) for its letter to the Council dated 23 October 2003 relating to North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC).

The Council understands the deep commitment to public participation codified in the North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), and has been pleased to see the positive results of the NAFEC in promoting public participation and local capacity building. As you highlighted in your letter, the NAFEC has been an effective and valuable venue for capacity building over the last several years. Originally begun as a way to address the budget surplus of the Secretariat, it has promoted the capacity building of community groups, facilitated information exchange amongst North American community organizations, enhanced public participation, and resulted in numerous positive environmental effects at the local level.

As you know, because of budgetary restrictions in light of currency fluctuations over the last year, the Council has reluctantly decided to suspend NAFEC for 2004. In its place, the Secretariat and JPAC have agreed to work together to implement a capacity building program, with dedicated funds of approximately C\$98,000. Because of our desire to encourage innovative work and capacity building to meet the goals and objectives of the NAAEC at the local level, this was a very difficult decision for the Council to make.



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With the CEC's new Operational Plan, this year will result in a more strategic alignment of CEC programs. Combined with the results of the 10 Year Review exercise, this may result in Council reviewing activities for capacity building, considering future activities, as well as other ways to achieve our commitments to public participation in the NAAEC.

We look forward to seeing the capacity building project developed by the Secretariat, with input from the JPAC, and to evaluating its success and other possible models for local capacity building for the coming years.

Sincerely,



José Manuel Eulas Montoro
Alternate Representative for Mexico

cc: Norine Smith, Alternate Representative for Canada
Judith Ayres, Alternate Representative for the United States of America
JPAC Members
William Kennedy, CEC Executive Director