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NOV - 8 2004

Ms. Donna Tingley
 JPAC Chair for 2004
 Commission for Environmental Cooperation
 393 St. Jacques Street West, Suite 200
 Montréal QC H2Y 1N9

Dear Ms. Tingley:

On behalf of the Council, and my colleagues from the United States and Mexico, I would like to thank you for the Joint Public Advisory Committee's advice to Council 03-04 regarding the environmentally sound management and tracking of hazardous wastes and hazardous recyclable materials.

JPAC's advice is of great use for the work we are undertaking together to conserve, protect and improve the environment in North America. This response focuses on the hazardous waste-related work being undertaken by the CEC in 2004 since, as you are aware, we are currently involved in a process to set the future direction for the organization.

The Hazardous Waste Task Force agrees with the JPAC that reducing the generation of hazardous wastes is a high priority and many of the Task Force members are involved in the efforts of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Working Group on Waste Prevention and Recycling (WGWPR). Each of the three NAFTA countries are members of the OECD and actively participate in the WGWPR.

The Task Force is exploring adopting a life cycle approach by linking its efforts with the work of SMOC. At the last meeting of the Task Force, members met with a representative of SMOC on behalf of the SMOC Working Group to begin identifying areas in which it would be effective to integrate the work on chemicals with the work on hazardous waste.

A focus of the Hazardous Waste Task Force is on developing and implementing a classification, verification and tracking system common to the North American region. On classification, the Task Force is updating a cross-walk of hazardous waste codes among the Parties, called a Hazardous Waste Code Dictionary, which will allow for easy matching of differing waste

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- 2 -

classifications across the Parties. On verification and tracking, the Task Force is seeking to harmonize data standards, systems architectures, etc. which will increase the ability of Parties to exchange tracking data. Once complete, it is anticipated that the developed systems will be able to communicate with each other and in doing so, provide "cradle to grave" tracking of hazardous wastes and hazardous recyclable materials.

We agree that the lack of infrastructure for waste treatment and disposal in Mexico places constraints on the development of a North American system for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes. However, based on the results obtained from the study for the "Development and Establishment of an Electronic Waste Tracking System in Mexico," Mexico intends to begin the processes for better technologies and methodologies in that regard.

For your information, an agreement was signed in March of this year, between Mexico's Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources (*Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* - SEMARNAT), the Canadian company Gedden Inc., El Salvador's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (*Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales*) and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, for the development and establishment of an electronic waste tracking system in Mexico. Without a doubt, this project will support the joint actions of the CEC in Mexico.

The Hazardous Waste Task Force has begun work in the important area of infrastructure-building on waste. There have been discussions on holding a workshop in Mexico on the environmentally sound collection and recycling of spent lead acid batteries. Pending the completion of the current planning process, the task force could further identify other topics in which waste infrastructure-building would be beneficial.

Once again, thank you for your advice, and I hope this information is of use to the JPAC.

Yours sincerely,



Norine Smith
Alternate Representative for Canada

c.c.: Mr. Jose Manuel Bulas, Alternate Representative for Mexico
Ms. Judith Ayres, Alternate Representative for the U.S.A.
Mr. William Kennedy, Executive Director of the CEC