



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

January 4, 2012

Diane E. Austin, Ph.D.
Chair, Good Neighbor Environmental Board
Associate Research Anthropologist, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology,
University of Arizona
P.O. Box 210030, Tucson, AZ 85719

Dear Chair Austin,

Thank you for your September 2011 letter presenting your position that the United States, as a party of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), should work with the other signatories, Mexico and Canada, to come to an agreement on Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment (TEIA). We appreciate the Good Neighbor Environmental Board's (GNEB) attention to and views on this matter.

The Obama Administration is committed to strengthening multilateral cooperation in order to achieve high levels of environmental quality. The United States strives to foster open communication with its North American neighbors regarding projects with potential or identified transboundary environmental impacts. That said, we recognize the concerns included in the GNEB's recent letter and agree that the TEIA issue should be revisited.

In the past, differences among the federal structures of the three parties of the NAAEC presented significant challenges to achieving a TEIA agreement. The United States believes it is appropriate to take a fresh look at this issue and has initiated discussions on the subject with our Canadian and Mexican partners, with the goal of identifying a new and effective approach. Consistent with this view, the White House Council on Environmental Quality also will continue to work with the appropriate federal departments and agencies to facilitate increased collaboration on border environmental issues.

Thank you again for the GNEB's ongoing work along the U.S.-Mexico border and attention to the issue of Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessments. We look forward to working with you as we continue these important discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy H. Sutley", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Nancy H. Sutley
Chair

cc: Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Cynthia Jones-Jackson
Acting Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Management and Outreach
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency