

Joint Communiqué of the United States – Chile Environmental Affairs Council and Joint Commission for Environmental Cooperation

January 20, 2010
Washington, D.C., United States of America

The Governments of the United States and Chile convened today the fifth meeting of the United States – Chile Environmental Affairs Council (EAC) and the third meeting of the Joint Commission for Environmental Cooperation (JCEC) in Washington, DC.

The EAC was chaired by Mr. Alvaro Sapag, Executive Director of the Chile's National Commission for the Environment (CONAMA), Mr. Mark Linscott, Assistant United States Trade Representative for Environment and Natural Resources, Office of the United States Trade Representative and Mr. Daniel Reifsnyder, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment and Sustainable Development, Bureau of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State. The JCEC was co-chaired by Mr. Waldemar Coutts, Deputy Director for the Environment, Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Daniel Reifsnyder.

Participants in the meeting included officials of the U.S. Department of State, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, U.S. Department of Justice, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. National Science Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service. Chilean participants included officials of the Directorate for the Environment, Antarctic and Maritime Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CONAMA.

The EAC reviewed progress made by Chile and the United States in ensuring effective implementation of, and compliance with, the obligations in the Environment Chapter of the FTA. Chile and the United States began discussions on the importance of developing a plan to monitor implementation and compliance with FTA obligations and will begin to take steps to further this joint effort over the next several months. Representatives of the Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (TEPAC), a USTR advisory committee discussed their experiences in providing advice on trade and environmental policies. CONAMA highlighted the recent establishment of a Chilean Ministry of the Environment and explained how this new government body will bolster the Countries' continued implementation of the FTA Environment Chapter.

The JCEC heard reports detailing the status of cooperative environmental projects. Representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of State, as well as representatives from non-governmental organization partners, Conservation VIP and the Environmental Law Institute, described the projects they are implementing and how these projects benefit the environment and citizens of the United States and Chile.

Both the JCEC meeting and a significant portion of the EAC meeting were open to the public, exemplifying our mutual commitment to a transparent, open, and participatory process. Today's meetings provided an opportunity for the public to learn about the ways in which the United States and Chile are cooperating to preserve and protect the environment and to ask questions about and to provide input on environmental cooperation work programs.

Chile and the United States signed a new Work Program which lays out a road map for U.S. – Chile environmental cooperation through 2011. The new Work Program identifies long-term goals to: (1) strengthen effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; (2) encourage development and adoption of sound environmental practices and technologies, particularly in business enterprises; (3) promote sustainable development and management of environmental resources including wild fauna and flora, protected wild areas, and other ecologically important ecosystems; and (4) encourage civil society participation in the environmental decision-making process and environmental education. The Work Program also identifies priority areas for future cooperation.

Today, the United States and Chile reaffirmed our strong commitment to work together to preserve and protect the environment. Our cooperative environmental work tangibly demonstrates that trade and environmental protection can be mutually supportive.