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EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] - Hecht - Signing of United States-Mexico Bilateral Agreement

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR - 8 1993

Why are I still getting?

OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: Katie McGinty, White House
Bo Cutter, NSC
Ambassador Rufus Yerxa, USTR
Dick Smith, State

FROM: Alan Hecht *Alan H.*
Acting Assistant Administrator

SUBJECT: Signing of U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Agreement (EPA-SEDESOL)

EPA Administrator Carol Browner will visit Mexico on March 15 and meet with her counterparts and with the President of Mexico. The visit is largely consultations, coming as it does a few days in advance of Trilateral negotiations on parallel environmental and labor agreements.

The NEC working group approved the signing of the Bilateral Agreement which was negotiated by the last Administration and initiated by both countries. The agreement gives EPA expanded authority to work with Mexico on all environmental issues beyond the U.S.-Mexico Border and Mexico City. The view in the NEC working group was that signing this agreement was an important part of our over all NAFTA-related parallel environmental package.

Discussions with Embassy staff in Mexico City indicate some confusion over Mexican intentions on the Bilateral Agreement. Some Mexican officials believe that the Bilateral Agreement would be duplicative of NACE. On substance, this is not the case.

While in Mexico City, the Administrator can clarify U.S. views on the NAFTA parallel package and discuss how the Bilateral Agreement complements existing activities. She could also indicate the intention of the USG to sign the agreement at a time and place to be determined. (See attached draft for a possible Press Release), and propose a general streamlining of working groups under both the Bilateral and Border activities.

Can I please get your views on this action and changes to the draft Press Release?

cc: Chuck Fox
John Kasper

draft

DRAFT

FOR RELEASE: MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1993

BROWNER ANNOUNCES PLANS TO SIGN BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH MEXICO

EPA Administrator Carol Browner announced today that the United States plans to sign in the near future a new bilateral agreement which will expand U.S.-Mexico environmental protection cooperation.

The agreement is expected to complement other environmental initiatives between the two countries as well as Canada, such as those contained in the Trilateral Memorandum of Understanding signed last year and the North America Free Trade Agreement.

Prior U.S.-Mexico bilateral agreements generally were limited to Mexico City and the border region and to air and water pollution problems. The forthcoming agreement is expected to strengthen bilateral cooperation for the protection and improvement of the environment throughout all of Mexico.

"The new environmental agreement will launch an expansion of efforts to assist in the betterment of the environment for all the people of Mexico, especially the children and the elderly. We enthusiastically and sincerely look forward to this new era of cooperative efforts," said Browner.

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