

In proposing a visit on Great Lakes issues, the Canadian Embassy in Washington identified two individuals as key contacts in the Embassy and in Environment Canada and included them as participants in the visit: Sheila Tooze, Environment Section of the Embassy and Susan Nameth, Manager, Great Lakes Environment Office of Environment Canada. Both individuals were knowledgeable about the subjects under discussion and contributed to a comprehensive and interesting program. In addition, Sheila Tooze had an extensive network of contacts on Capitol Hill and she advised them early about the date and nature of the proposed visit. Furthermore, she arranged a briefing for all U.S. participants shortly before their departure to give a general outline of the Canadian perspective on Great Lakes issues. During the concluding session, several staffers spoke about the need for some type of on-going contact with the Embassy to continue discussions. This type of support by the Embassy was very helpful in ensuring a successful and well attended program. A copy of the report on this visit prepared by Sheila Tooze is attached.

Ethics Committees

The Centre's programs have the approval of the Ethics Committees of both Houses of Congress. However, in recent years there has been considerable monitoring of activities by the Ethics Committees, especially by the Senate Committee. Last year the Senate Ethics Committee asked the State Department to obtain an opinion from the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa about the non-partisan nature of the Centre. As the Centre has a close working relationship with the U.S. Embassy, it was able to ensure that this request was answered promptly, thus facilitating the participation of Senate staffers.

This year, the Senate Ethics Committee decided to initiate a new procedure for granting approval by preparing a series of questions on the legal status, work and activities of the Centre which it sent via the State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa. The State Department also decided to involve the Congressional Relations Unit of the Canadian Embassy in Washington in the processing of this response. While the responses to the questions were readily prepared and the approval was given to Senate staffers to participate in this visit, this does illustrate the importance attached to clearance by the Ethics Committees. Considerable time and effort were expended by a number of players in both Ottawa and Washington in meeting the Committee's request for information. A copy of the Centre's response is attached.