Rick Hind, Legislative Director
John Deans, Policy Analyst
Greenpeace
702 H Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Messrs. Hind and Deans:

Thank you for your August 24, 2010, letter to Secretary Napolitano expressing your concerns regarding the Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC). The Secretary forwarded your letter to me for response.

Protecting the Nation’s critical infrastructure requires a comprehensive, effective, and collaborative partnership among all stakeholders. Such collaboration involves many activities, including: planning; coordination; security program implementation; operational activities related to critical infrastructure protection security measures, including incident response, recovery, and reconstitution from man-made and naturally occurring events; and the sharing of information about threats, vulnerabilities, protective measures, best practices, and lessons learned.

The CIPAC was established to provide a mechanism under the National Infrastructure Protection Plan framework to help facilitate unfettered communication and coordination on critical infrastructure topics while properly protecting sensitive critical infrastructure information. In providing this necessary forum, the CIPAC is equally committed to the principles of open government and public access. Accordingly, and as indicated in the Federal Register notice establishing the CIPAC, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) operates the CIPAC consistent with open-government principles while enabling the necessary discussion on sensitive critical infrastructure issues. As such, the CIPAC holds an annual public meeting announced in the Federal Register. CIPAC maintains a publicly accessible website, www.dhs.gov/cipac, which includes past meeting agendas and reports of CIPAC sector partnerships activities. In addition, CIPAC distributes an annual summary report of partnership goals, selected accomplishments, and key initiatives during its annual public plenary meeting. We are confident that our current structure properly balances the requirements of DHS to execute its objectives transparently while bolstering the security of the Nation’s critical infrastructure.

Some, but not all, of the Nation’s critical infrastructure is subject to regulatory programs. DHS ensures that communications on regulatory matters, such as the
Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards, are conducted consistent with the applicable regulatory requirements and procedures

DHS is committed to the transparent operation of the CIPAC, and we appreciate your interest and welcome your perspective and comments. We will be incorporating in future CIPAC annual plenary agendas a public comment opportunity and welcome your participation at the next plenary. At the same time, we will be soliciting written public comment that will be published and made available to the public. Additionally, we extend an invitation to members of the Blue-Green Chemical Security Coalition to meet with us on a biannual basis to strengthen our dialogue and mutual understanding. Please contact Todd Keil, Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection, at (703) 235-3945 if this invitation is of interest.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Rand Beers
Under Secretary

cc: Paul Orum
   Consultant, Blue-Green Chemical Security Coalition
   Independent Consultant, Center for American Progress