

PREFACE

For more than 20 years, environmental cooperation in North America—Canada, Mexico, and the USA—has been fostered under the auspices of free trade. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) allowed for an institutional framework through which the environment would be taken care of through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). As long as trade would go hand in hand with the environment, a swift focus on the environmental cooperation took place. Other patterns outside the remit of NAAEC have also been developed. However, regardless of origin, environmental cooperation tends to focus on inland issues, leaving ocean and coastal areas to play a peripheral role.

It is in this context that this book was planned. Contributors were asked to provide their insights into different ocean, sea, and coastal issues in North America. Taking into account the international and environmental backgrounds, a complementary agenda has been identified. However, present times are marred by a deteriorating relationship between NAFTA partners. NAFTA itself is at risk, jointly with the NAAEC, and any move towards strengthening environmental policies looks distant for the time being.

The Trump Administration has just entered into office and has shown unfriendly signs towards environmental protection and conservation, which goes against the very core of environmental cooperation between North American partners. However, considering that the three countries

share marine resources, and their citizens share common concerns, it is worth pointing out that a realistic option to bring forward these issues is to continue their diffusion while a change in government takes place.

On finishing this edited book, I thank the series editors, Rebecka Villanueva Ulfgard and César Villanueva, for the opportunity to contribute to such an exciting series project.

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