



THE
ENVIRONMENTAL
COUNCIL OF
THE STATES

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January 12, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy, Administrator
A. Stanley Meiburg, Acting Deputy Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
William Jefferson Clinton Federal Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Via e-mail

Re: 2016 Multipurpose Grants to States and Tribes for Environmental Programs

Dear Administrator McCarthy and Deputy Administrator Meiburg:

The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) appreciates the time taken by Acting Deputy Administrator Meiburg and senior EPA officials to speak by phone with ECOS' officers on January 6 regarding the *Multipurpose Categorical Grants Program* established in the *2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act*. This letter reiterates points made during that conversation.

It is significant that Congress created a new categorical grant program. The flexibility embedded in the language of the budget is responsive to what states have been seeking through congressional testimony and other forms of communication for some time—the opportunity to allocate rare increases in categorical grant appropriations to priorities they identify—as opposed to specifically directed activities.

The \$21M in appropriated funds are for all states and tribes, and as such are limited. During the call, we suggested that EPA develop and apply a formula that gives a baseline amount to states, to tribes, and that perhaps reserves a set aside amount to give some recipients additional funds based on established criteria. ECOS is very interested in working with EPA on this formula.

While these are "no year" funds and as such are available until used up—the more quickly we show progress and positive results, the better chance the funds will be renewed. We also discussed how states could to make the funds go farther by working with their Regions to pool the funds to address a particular joint area of concern. This may not work for all Regions, of course, and thus this is only an option EPA could encourage. Furthermore, EPA needs to ensure that any reporting requirements are not burdensome, so that states and tribes are not discouraged from using these funds.

The states are committed to demonstrating the value of a joint governance approach to these funds by working in collaboration with EPA to ensure that they advance EPA's goals while being responsive to the unique needs and priorities of individual states. ECOS firmly believes that if we work together to efficiently disperse the funds and to document meaningful results, we may find this new categorical grant program continued in future years.

We look forward to continued dialogue with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Martha Rudolph
ECOS President
Director of Environmental Programs
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Cc: David Bloom, Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Howard Corcoran, Director, Office of Grants and Debarment
Mark Rupp, Deputy Associate Administrator for Intergovernmental Relations
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