



# PRESS RELEASE

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Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)

## **New Report Highlights Community Engagement and Equity Approaches in State Permitting**

**Washington, DC** – Drawing upon recent state and federal collaboration, a new ECOS report showcases valuable approaches to advancing community engagement and environmental equity in permitting at the state level. The February 2017 *ECOS Green Report, [State Approaches to Community Engagement and Equity Considerations in Permitting](#)*, summarizes innovative efforts conducted by state agencies in California, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The report recaps information presented in webinars held by ECOS for states and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) during which these six states presented. John Linc Stine, Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, has made equity a prominent element of his current tenure as ECOS President.

The report highlights elements of the above states' strategies for considering environmental equity in the permitting process, such as:

**Increasing Public Participation:** Establishing communication pathways may help to avoid delays, identify new solutions with input from stakeholders, contribute to improved community relations, and ensure communities are heard in the permitting process.

**Maintaining Community Relationships:** Maintaining a relationship with communities following a permitting process helps to ensure continued success. Ongoing relationships are developed through regulatory programs, screening and monitoring, rulemaking, and policy work.

**Transferable Practices:** State environmental agencies are advancing internal practices to integrate equity into the permitting process as smoothly and effectively as possible. Practices include education and training of agency staff, clarifying permitting processes, and obtaining legislative support.

**Internal Aids and Guidance:** State agencies are developing tools to guide staff and permit applicants through the permitting process, and are using technology to improve community engagement in permitting.

ECOS continues to advance its work on community engagement and equity through a new affinity group, conference calls, and webinars.

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*ECOS is the national nonprofit, nonpartisan association of state and territorial environmental commissioners. For more information, visit [www.ecos.org](http://www.ecos.org).*