



# Environmental Council of the States

1250 H Street NW, Suite 850 | Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 266-4920 | [www.ecos.org](http://www.ecos.org)

Letter from the Environmental Council of the States

To the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Addressing Emergency Funding Legislation for COVID-19 Response

March 30, 2020

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Dear Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, Chairwoman McCollum, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittees:

As you consider emergency actions to help the nation respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and as you return to regular FY21 appropriations work, we call to your attention the need for emergency financial assistance to state environmental agencies that implement federally delegated environmental programs, as well as the need for important annual federal fiscal support.

States generally carry out Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act delegated authorities using a combination of federal State and Tribal Assistance grants, state-appropriated funds, and revenue from permit and license fees. During the interruption to economic activity necessitated by measures to reduce transmission of the virus, state revenues and fees will inevitably experience significant reductions that will impact state environmental agency budgets. In addition, the extension of income tax deadlines will delay the collection of revenue and create current fiscal year state budget shortfalls. These reductions likely will make it challenging for state environmental agencies to protect public health and the environment and meet delegated responsibilities without additional federal support.

The protection of public health and the environment, always an important priority, is no less critical during this time. In fact, states are already confronting increasing environmental challenges such as proper disposal of COVID-19 medical waste including personal protective equipment. States are also seeing the need for funding and support to accelerate the appropriate and widespread use of electronic permitting, monitoring, teleworking, and information sharing.

We urge you to consider additional funding to support the state environmental agencies through this period of new work and increased financial stress. We would be pleased to share additional information regarding these needs or to answer any questions you may have. Please email ECOS Executive Director Don Welsh at [dwelsh@ecos.org](mailto:dwelsh@ecos.org) to discuss this matter further.

Regards,

**Jim Macy**  
Nebraska Department of  
Environment and Energy  
ECOS President

**Patrick McDonnell**  
Pennsylvania Department of  
Environmental Protection  
ECOS Vice President

**Ben Grumbles**  
Maryland Department of the  
Environment  
ECOS Secretary-Treasurer

**Becky Keogh**  
Arkansas Department of Energy and  
Environment  
ECOS Past President

**Donald Welsh**  
ECOS Executive Director