



# Environmental Council of the States

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Dear ECOS Members:

I am honored that you have elected me to serve as President of ECOS for the 2020-21 year. While we continue to deal with COVID-19 and the impacts it has had on our state programs and ECOS meetings, there is also an opportunity to learn from the experience and use new tools to expand and enhance our work. Virtual meetings and hearings, more direct outreach to employees of environmental agencies, and remote inspections of critical facilities are just some of the initiatives we are collectively learning to implement in our jurisdictions. With your support, ECOS will continue to lead on these and other initiatives.

*Federal Transition.* Now that the election is over, much of our work will entail ensuring state environmental programs continue to have a voice in setting priorities in the new federal administration. I look forward to working with the officers and the membership to make sure that post-election, our collective perspective helps inform decision-making under the Biden administration.

*Environmental Equity, Inclusion and Justice.* For too long, many minority and low-income communities have shared an excess burden of environmental impacts. Great strides have been made over the last two decades to improve our environmental justice programs, and it is time to take the next step. I am excited to lead the conversation on how we improve environmental and health outcomes in underrepresented communities and learn from each other new, innovative approaches to this important work.

*Further Strengthening the State-Federal Relationship.* Over the last several years, ECOS has focused on improving the process of engagement, interaction, and cooperation with our federal partners. In the next year, we will continue to work to ensure these concepts are included in federal programs and policies.

Finally, this year we will be updating our organization's Strategic Plan. I look forward to interacting with each of you as we develop this document. The Plan has functioned as a critical component directing our work over the years, so engagement in this process will be important.

Thank you again for all the phenomenal work you and your staff do to support our organization and our environment. My virtual door is always open for any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patrick McDonnell

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

**Ben Grumbles**  
Maryland Department of the  
Environment  
ECOS Vice President

**Myra Reece**  
South Carolina Department of Health  
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**Donald Welsh**  
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