



Environmental Council of the States

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January 20, 2023

Dear Colleagues:

Happy New Year! I'm honored to be your ECOS President and to continue serving with you as we embrace unprecedented challenges and opportunities for environmental and public health progress in our states and communities.

It's a tradition of ECOS for the President to provide priorities for the coming year. My priorities for ECOS in 2023 include:

* Welcoming new members and ensuring ECOS continues to thrive in a year of transition and change, filling available leadership, committee, workgroup, and board positions while always embracing the bipartisanship, diversity and talent that makes our organization strong. This is particularly important as we build upon progress from last year and follow up on our recent constructive discussions with Congress and EPA leadership.

* Fostering cooperative federalism and the co-regulator relationship with our federal partners. States must continue to advocate for technical assistance and financial support for capacity-building, meaningful communication and engagement, escalation procedures to resolve disputes with regional or headquarters offices, and mutual respect among co-regulators. This applies not only to implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) and other recent environmental investments but to delegated federal regulatory, permitting, and enforcement programs that states continue to carry out.

* Partnering with local governments, as well as federal agencies, to advance environmental health in our communities, including environmental justice and equity. ECOS members should continue to strive for deeper engagement with communities, stakeholders, and local leaders and urge EPA and other federal agencies to provide clear guidance and support for meeting requirements and reasonable expectations as established by federal law.

* Reducing the risks from PFAS chemicals safely and responsibly, using sound science, risk communication, and technology for holistic and sustainable solutions. The land application of biosolids is a particularly important area for states, agriculture, utilities, and other sectors to develop realistic solutions with strong support from our federal partners.

* Increasing climate resilience and clean energy solutions among states, communities, and public and private sector partners. ECOS's new Climate and Energy workgroup can serve as a timely platform for state environmental agencies to learn from one another and advocate for customized local and regional solutions to reduce emissions, plan for and adapt to climate impacts, and optimize opportunities under the Inflation Reduction Act.

By all counts, ECOS and its Members (all 50 states plus D.C, Puerto Rico, and Guam) are positioned to have an impactful and engaging year ahead.

Please don't hesitate to share thoughts with me, Vice President Chuck Carr Brown, Past President Todd Parfitt, or any of the ECOS staff.

Thanks for all you do to protect the environment and public health across the nation.

Myra

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