



# Environmental Council of the States

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Colleagues:

It's an honor to serve as your President over the coming year. ECOS is well positioned to continue providing a unique bipartisan forum for shared learning and consensus-based advocacy among state environmental agency leaders on the most pressing opportunities for environmental and public health progress.

I look forward to working with all of you, including my great team of officers — Vice President Leah Feldon (Oregon), Secretary-Treasurer Rob Singletary (Oklahoma), and Past President James Kenney (New Mexico) — and other members of ECOS's Board of Directors and will devote particular attention to the following priorities:

## **Cooperative Federalism.**

ECOS must continue to advocate for its well-established principles on the federal-state relationship, building upon our consensus for states to be recognized as co-regulators as well as co-partners with our federal colleagues. This is especially important with respect to federal funding from Congress for cooperative federalism grants, so critical to state primacy of air, water, waste, and other programs and water infrastructure revolving funds, but also with respect to standards and permits, enforcement and oversight, and science and technology, all of which require close coordination with EPA and other federal agencies.

## **Artificial Intelligence.**

ECOS must continue to embrace opportunities for learning, using, and investing in AI and other tools to modernize the business of environmental protection. It comes with risks but also rewards that could revolutionize the effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency of our state and federal programs. ECOS has some excellent forums for collaboration on the positive and negative aspects of AI within our own agencies, communities, and state economies, such as the E-Enterprise Leadership Council (EELC) with strong state, tribal, and EPA participation. Every ECOS member should have multiple and meaningful opportunities to understand and responsibly advance AI, such as through the EELC, the ECOS Digital Business Workgroup, the Interstate Technology & Regulatory Council's (ITRC) new project team on AI & Machine Learning, and other collaborations.

I look forward to working with and learning from all of you and hope you'll never hesitate to share your thoughts, concerns, and successes with me.

Sincerely,

Chris Wells  
ECOS President

**Chris Wells**  
Mississippi Department of  
Environmental Quality  
ECOS President

**Leah Feldon**  
Oregon Department of  
Environmental Quality  
ECOS Vice President

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**James Kenney**  
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**Ben Grumbles**  
ECOS Executive Director