ECOS

Resolution 25-2
Approved November 10, 2025
By email vote

As certified by
Ben Grumbles
Executive Director

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE IN ADVANCING COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

WHEREAS, ECOS represents states, territories, and the District of Columbia, throughout this resolution the term "states" indicates states, territories, and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, cooperative federalism is a foundational principle of environmental governance in the United States, recognizing the shared responsibility and partnership between states and U.S. EPA in implementing and enforcing federal environmental laws; and

WHEREAS, states, which have assumed more than 90% of delegable federal environmental authorities, rely on objective, peer-reviewed science to design programs and make decisions tailored to regional and local conditions; and

WHEREAS, robust, transparent, peer-reviewed foundational and applied science underpins the development of risk assessments, environmental standards, guidance, and regulatory frameworks and is critical to effective decision-making, policy development, and protection of public health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, some states do not have the capacity to individually support these needs, U.S. EPA is positioned to conduct scientific research, and provide science-based tools, nationwide data sets, and scientific standards to help ensure regulatory clarity across states, regions, and the country; and

WHEREAS, U.S. EPA's role in performing scientific research is a cost-effective mechanism to provide national scientific and risk assessment capabilities that reduces duplication while informing national and state level decisions critical to protecting public health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, state agencies regularly rely on U.S. EPA scientific products, and significant changes to U.S. EPA's scientific enterprise that do not reflect state research needs could restrict state capacity to efficiently address environmental and health priorities; and

WHEREAS, federal environmental laws like the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act direct U.S. EPA to develop scientific, risk assessment, or other research tools in furtherance of protection of public health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development has historically produced important scientific tools, research methods, data, scientific evidence, training, and analytical guidelines for use by states and federal programs; and

WHEREAS, states respect U.S. EPA authority to decide how it organizes to conduct this foundational and applied science work; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between states and U.S. EPA on scientific research and data sharing strengthens environmental and health protections, improves efficiency, enhances public trust, and ensures regulatory decisions are based on the best available evidence.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE STATES (ECOS):

Encourages ongoing partnerships between the U.S. EPA, states, academia, and other stakeholders to advance foundational and applied science, and its application in regulatory policy, consistent with the principles of cooperative federalism;

Urges the U.S. Congress to support foundational and applied science at U.S. EPA for the benefit of national consistency, use, and customization at the state, local, and regional levels; and

Urges that within the structure of cooperative federalism, U.S. EPA:

1. **Respect state-developed scientific research, risk assessments, and innovative tools** designed to address public health and environmental matters in their state;
2. **Prioritize and invest in foundational and applied environmental science** informed by coordination and prioritization with states to support national and state regulatory and policy priorities;
3. **Enhance scientific transparency and communication** between the U.S. EPA and state agencies, particularly in the development of rules, risk assessments, and scientific models;
4. **Collaborate with states on scientific research and innovation**, including the co-development of methodologies, tools, and datasets that reflect diverse geographic, ecological, and public health contexts;
5. **Ensure early and substantive engagement with state environmental agencies** in scientific assessments and rulemakings that have significant state implementation implications; and
6. **Support training, data access, and technical capacity-building for states**, particularly to help states interpret and apply evolving scientific standards and address environmental challenges that states and territories are facing now and into the future.