Environmental Council of the States
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October 6, 2026

Dear ECOS Colleagues:

Thank you for the honor of serving as your President over the next year. As with all previous ECOS Presidents, I am sharing my top priorities in working with you, our federal partners, and other key leaders in the public and private sectors to advance public health and environmental protection. We're stronger together and I look forward to working with all of you.

The priorities I want to uplift in the coming year align with ECOS's five-year Strategic Plan, continuing to emphasize peer sharing and learning amongst states, ensuring states have the capacity and resources to meet our responsibilities, shaping the national dialogue through the perspective of all the states, and building enduring relationships with our federal colleagues for sustainable progress. Cooperative federalism and innovative partnerships run through each priority below and are essential to lasting progress.

1. **Securing Federal Funding**. While states provide the majority of funding for their delegated programs, federal dollars and technical assistance remain critical for cooperative federalism and successful environmental outcomes. Congressional and EPA support for categorical grants are essential for delegated programs under the Clean Air Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and other delegated programs, and ECOS should continue to advocate for robust federal support while helping the public better understand states' roles. The Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds deliver environmental health and economic development benefits in our communities and should be reauthorized. Additionally, Capitalization grants and set-aside programs should be funded by Congress to ensure the programs continue to revolve and evolve to meet local and national needs.

2. **Supporting Resilient Energy and Water Systems**. States and communities face growing challenges and opportunities with energy and water resources and infrastructure. Increasing demand for data centers across the US is just one example of the importance of the energy-water nexus, ranging from energy efficiency and battery storage to closed-loop water cooling and reuse. ECOS is well positioned to accelerate progress on infrastructure funding and management, and regulatory innovations and partnerships, to help reduce stress on communities and ecosystems, increase water and energy resiliency, and improve affordability.

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Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
ECOS President

Rob Singletary
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
ECOS Secretary-Treasurer

Chris Wells
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ECOS Past President

Ben Grumbles
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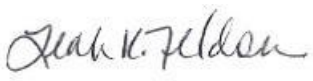
3. **Advancing Strong Partnerships for Science, Information Sharing, and Regulatory Modernization**. As environmental co-regulators, states, tribes, and EPA benefit from collaboration on shared tools, including AI, to meet current and emerging environmental challenges. ECOS can also promote partnerships for prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and emerging contaminants, such as wildfire/prescribed burning and microplastics. It can also support responsible modernization of regulatory programs, such as total maximum daily load approval and permitting improvements. This priority builds on the existing important work of the Environmental Research Institute of the States, the E-Enterprise Leadership Council, and the Interstate Technology & Regulatory Council, which ECOS can advocate to continue and expand.

As I step into this role, I want to thank you for your partnership and leadership. The perspectives and experience each member brings to ECOS, together with our collective ability to work across differences, demonstrate the value of cooperative federalism and innovative partnerships. This shared, solutions-oriented commitment gives me confidence that together we can address today's environmental challenges and continue to advance protections for human health and the environment across our nation. I look forward to working with all of you in the year ahead!

Sincerely,



Leah Feldon