



# Environmental Council of the States

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October 14, 2020

Mr. Peter Wright, Assistant Administrator, OLEM  
Mr. Barry Breen, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, OLEM  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Via email transmission to: [wright.peter@epa.gov](mailto:wright.peter@epa.gov) and [breen.barry@epa.gov](mailto:breen.barry@epa.gov)

Dear AA Wright and PDAA Breen:

On behalf of the ECOS Waste Committee, I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to OLEM for holding an early engagement call with committee members on October 8. We were pleased to have an initial conversation with Mr. Breen and your Office Directors regarding development of OLEM's priorities under the FY 2022-23 National Program Guidance process.

In recent discussions with EPA senior leadership and with OMB, ECOS has identified four priority issues: adequate funding, flexibility, E-Enterprise for the Environment, and technology infrastructure. These priorities will be reflected in much of the input ECOS provides for U.S. EPA's consideration in developing the National Program Guidance.

Federal funding makes up about 27% of average state environmental agency budgets, and overall State and Tribal Assistance Grant funding has been flat for 18 years. Budget impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic stand to impose further challenges. Adequate federal funding and flexibility in the use of funds and in program implementation will be important to continued success in delivering results. Joint governance under E-Enterprise for the Environment is a key tool for driving program modernization and coordinating needed investments in information systems. Support for technology infrastructure and the latitude for state pilot projects will accelerate the adoption of new more efficient tools to meet our shared goals.

In addition, members of the ECOS Waste Committee raised on last week's call a few priority issues for your early consideration. These include funding to support: the integration of environmental justice initiatives in state programs; the cleanup of new Brownfields properities that may arise from the COVID-related economic downturn; strategies to address emerging contaminants like PFAS; and programs to promote recycling and plastics reduction.

**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  
and Environmental Control  
ECOS Secretary-Treasurer

**Jim Macy**  
Nebraska Department of Environment  
and Energy  
ECOS Past President

**Donald Welsh**  
ECOS Executive Director

In fact, ECOS looks forward to embarking soon on a new OLEM-funded project surrounding the management of plastic, food, medical, and animal waste during emergencies and shut-in situations.

We also look forward to continuing discussions in 2021 of OLEM's FY2022-23 priorities. Please feel free to reach out anytime to me at [darsi.foss@wisconsin.gov](mailto:darsi.foss@wisconsin.gov), Waste Committee Vice Chair Scott Thompson at [scott.thompson@deq.ok.gov](mailto:scott.thompson@deq.ok.gov), or ECOS Executive Project Manager Lia Parisien at [lparisien@ecos.org](mailto:lparisien@ecos.org). Thank you for your partnership.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darsi Foss". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a thin blue line.

Darsi Foss  
Chair, ECOS Waste Committee  
Administrator, Environmental Management Division,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

cc:

Donald S. Welsh, Executive Director, ECOS  
Scott Thompson, Vice Chair, ECOS Waste Committee,  
Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality  
Ellen Manges, Acting Deputy Director,  
OLEM Office of Communications, Partnerships, and Analysis