



March 12, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leadership,

We are the national organizations that represent state and local agencies in your districts that protect public health and the environment and support economic growth and prosperity. Our organizations encompass the environmental agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and territories, as well as their local government partners across the country.

States implement more than 90% of our nation's environmental programs, and federal funding to support our agencies and programs must keep pace with inflation and the rising cost of meeting our obligations during a period of energy expansion. Cutting funds that support our programs would have uncountable unintended consequences.

The nation's environmental laws are based upon the concept of cooperative federalism. Under most federal laws, the federal government plays the role of providing the basic regulatory

framework, while our state and local agencies are vital partners directly responsible for day-to-day implementation and enforcement of many of the environmental programs. From their on-the-ground expertise, state and local agencies understand that melding national environmental regulations with local priorities, economic strategies, and social needs requires significant resources.

To achieve clean air, water and land under cooperative federalism, Congress must provide funding leadership that shares the cost of implementing our programs with states – programs that are essential for innovating and adopting new technologies as well as enabling a growing economy. However, federal funding for implementation, referred to as Categorical Grants, has remained static for two decades, despite historic inflation and the rising costs to deliver the cleanest air, water, and land. State and local agencies have to invest significantly more funds beyond the statutory match requirements to meet their delegation commitments. Adequate federal funding is needed for:

- State plan development, implementation, and enforcement that drastically reduces pollution, protects public health, increases American prosperity, and improves our economy;
- Swiftly issuing durable and defensible permits that enable companies to innovate and compete;
- Recruitment, training, and retention of a world-class professional workforce;
- Modernization of data, permitting, and compliance systems to improve accuracy, cybersecurity, and transparency;
- Maintenance of, and sustainable investment in, the infrastructure that delivers cleaner air, remediated land, safe drinking and recycled water, healthy watersheds and wetlands, and effectively treated wastewater and stormwater;
- Technical assistance for small businesses and rural communities to improve physical, operational, and financial resiliency;
- Frontline response and on-the-ground assistance before, during, and after natural disasters such as wildfires and hurricanes;
- Protection of unique and irreplaceable natural areas that enrich the flora and fauna for communities and for recreational opportunities; and
- Research into emerging contaminants and appropriate detection and destruction practices, nonpoint source nutrient reduction and wastewater treatment technologies for difficult pollutants, air quality around wildfires and prescribed burns, and other priorities¹.

Funding cuts below Fiscal Year 2024 levels will undermine the protections our agencies provide to the prosperity and health of people across the country. Appropriated funding that adequately accounts for new and historic environmental law mandates is critical for state and local agency budgets and ensuring the balance of cooperative federalism. The complexity of today's environmental challenges and the opportunities for American leadership in a transforming economy requires robust state/federal partnership to ensure reasonable, balanced, effective, and

¹ [2024 Environmental Research Institute of the States \(ERIS\) Survey Report, February 14, 2025](#)

efficient strategies for environmental protection. We rely on Congress to support that partnership by sustaining the funding and resources that give our agencies what they need to assure Americans of the cleanest air, water and land.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of us. We look forward to continued success in our cooperative federal partnership.


Sincerely,



Ben Grumbles
Executive Director
Environmental Council of the States
(ECOS)



Marla Stelk
Executive Director
National Association of Wetland Managers
(NAWM)



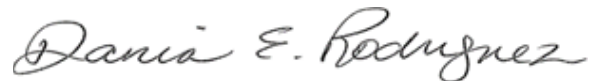
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