

# STAG Categorical Grants: Environmental Council of the States March 1st Letter to EPA/OMB Opposing Reductions



**Walter Wright, Jr.**  
wwright@mwlaw.com  
(501) 688.8839

## Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

03/07/2017

The Environmental Council of the States (“ECOS”) sent a March 1st letter to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (collectively “EPA”) noting:

... Information released yesterday regarding the OMB passback for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 EPA budget proposed cuts of 30 percent to State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) categorical grants, and cuts to infrastructure and other important state programs.

Almost every state (including Arkansas) depend to varying degrees on federal funds to operate the delegated federal environmental programs.

ECOS expresses concern about this budget item stating that:

... cuts to STAG categorical grants, or to EPA programs operated by states, will have profound impacts on states’ ability to implement the core environmental programs as expected by our citizens.

ECOS describes itself as the national nonprofit, nonpartisan association of state and territorial environmental agency leaders. Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Director Becky Keogh serves as Secretary-treasurer of the organization.

ECOS cites prior remarks by United States Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt referencing the states and EPA as “partners, not adversaries” in “carrying out the work of protecting natural resources and the environment. . . . The organization further notes that states have taken 96 percent of the delegable authorities under the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. As a result, the states are noted to on average provide “well over half – and in many cases, three-quarters – of the funds needed to run core delegated environmental programs. States continue to fill the gap created by declining federal funds through increased fees on the regulated community and from other funding sources.”

The ECOS letter concludes that, “The time is now to meaningfully invest in state environmental agencies through robust – not reduced – STAG categorical grants.”

[A copy of the letter can be downloaded here.](#)

