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## **ADEQ Director Steve Owens Named President of National State Environmental Directors Association**

PHOENIX (Oct. 9, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens has been elected President of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), the national association of directors of state environmental protection agencies throughout the United States.

Founded in 1993, ECOS works to improve the ability of state environmental agencies to protect public health and the environment and promote greater involvement by the states in environmental decision making by the federal government.

“ECOS’ mission is to ensure that the states’ voice on environmental protection is heard at the federal level and make sure that the states receive adequate resources from the federal government to do the job we are required to do by Congress and EPA,” Director Owens said. “ECOS and the states have played an especially critical role in recent years in protecting our air, water and precious natural resources from pollution.”

Owens’ role as the new ECOS President will be especially important in light of the upcoming changes in Washington, D.C. “Regardless of who wins the election, there will be a new President, a new EPA Administrator and a slew of new people in leadership positions at EPA,” Owens said. “As ECOS President, I will be working closely with the new national leadership to develop a better working relationship between the federal government and the states and make sure that environmental protection stays a top priority and receives adequate funding. This will be especially important in light of the serious budget problems the states and federal government are facing.”

Owens pointed out that since 2002 the states have received an additional 280 federal rules to implement without additional federal funding to implement those rules. States now operate 96 percent of the federal programs that are delegable to them, conducting most of the permitting, enforcement, inspections, monitoring, and data collection required by federal environmental laws.

Owens also noted that as ECOS President, he will be in an even stronger position to advocate for Arizona’s interests at the national level. “I’ve always worked hard to make sure that Arizona’s voice is heard in Washington and nationally,” Owens said. “Being ECOS President will give me even more opportunities to advocate for Arizona’s interests.”

Owens was selected by Governor Janet Napolitano to head ADEQ in January 2003. He is the longest-serving Director in ADEQ’s history.