



## ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

March 5, 2019

### **ADEQ Director Keogh Testifies at Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee Hearing**

**NORTH LITTLE ROCK**—Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Becky W. Keogh testified in Washington, D.C., today before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety. Director Keogh addressed cooperative federalism, closing the gaps on environmental challenges, and the state of the Air in Arkansas—noting that Arkansas is in attainment with all National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and is a model for how states efficiently and effectively take the lead in improving and maintaining air quality across the country. In 2016, Director Keogh testified before the Committee, specifically noting the atmosphere of coercive federalism at the time between the states and the United State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Director Keogh’s written testimony can be found here: [https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/8/f/8f8b946c-a624-46a9-a39b-da6f62a92609/EFCD576CB2913E99EB986F0D558488D0.03.05.2019-keogh-testimony.pdf](https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/8/f/8f8b946c-a624-46a9-a39b-da6f62a92609/EFCD576CB2913E99EB986F0D558488D0.03.05.2019-keogh-testimony.pdf).

#### **Excerpts from Director Keogh’s testimony:**

“We find value in working with our partner agencies to better inform our working knowledge of issues of common concern and to establish best work practices moving forward. These outcomes often have the benefit of driving improvements in air quality as well. We believe that EPA can continue to foster this type of dialogue by allowing flexible sources of funding that allow states to consider solutions to issues that states themselves determine are important to them, which may include fire policy in Arkansas. Cooperative federalism means trusting states as the co-equal sovereigns that they are and creating an environment in which states can thrive with support of EPA.

...

We also coordinate with other state and local governments units and other sovereigns to solve complex cross-jurisdictional problems. Just this month we have asked for (and received) assistance from the states of Texas and Louisiana and from our state’s National Guard and departments of Health, Agriculture, and Forestry to help us extinguish an expansive underground fire that is threatening the air and water quality of one of our most vulnerable communities. But, frustratingly both to us and our federal counterpart, there is little EPA has the authority to do to assist when it comes to one-offs. Secretary Wheeler and our Regional Administrator, Anne Idsal, are both dedicating substantial time and energy looking for ways the federal government can help us close the gaps on this environmental challenge that exceeds the scope of our small-state’s resources.

...

Seventy percent of important environmental legislation enacted by the states now has little or nothing to do with national policy and only about 25 percent (approximately \$2.8 billion) of the total amount states now spend annually on environment and natural resources comes from Washington. State and local governments are responsible for nearly all the enforcement of national environmental laws and continue to dominate decisions in areas like land use and waste disposal ... The role of the states has evolved, but there has not been a substantial modification of the federal role. Now that states do the majority of the lifting once done in Washington, why not use the wealth of EPA resources, both technical and financial, to help states fill the gaps.”

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