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## PFAS and Harmful Algal Blooms: Environmental Council of the States Case Studies on State-Level Risk Communication

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The Environmental Council of the States (“ECOS”) has made available a number of state case studies addressing what it describes as two priority contaminants for which the states struggle to communicate the risks.

The two contaminants include:

- Per – and polyfluoralkyl substances (“PFAS”)
- Harmful Algal Blooms (“HABs”)

ECOS introduces the case studies by stating that:

Most state environmental and health agencies have oversight of their water systems, and are responsible for implementing mitigation measures to reduce chemical exposure, protect public health, and communicate risks associated with contaminated water. Although the U.S. EPA issued a drinking water health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion for two PFAS compounds (PFOA and PFOS), and draft recreational/swimming guideline values for cyanotoxins, states still issue their own health advisories and/or regulations related to these contaminants, compounding efforts to streamline communications and help the public understand risks. As state environmental and health regulators consider actions on contaminants, it’s important to frame the subject in a unified manner for the public and other stakeholders.

To help states overcome these communication challenges, ECOS and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) interviewed environmental and health agency staff from 13 states about how they frame their risk communications. We compiled the results into case studies that outline the background of the contamination in the state, development of guidance values and health advisories, rollout of advisories and relevant information, key messages for the public, and challenges and gaps.

The [13 state case studies](#) can be found here.

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Director Becky Keogh serves as Vice President of ECOS.