



ASTSWMO, Providing Pathways to Our  
Nation's Environmental Stewardship Since 1974

November 8, 2019

Dear ASTSWMO Colleagues and Friends,

This year signifies the 45<sup>th</sup> year of ASTSWMO excellence, and we share this celebration together as ***States Leading the Way, the 50 States, Five Territories and the District of Columbia (States)***. As a convener of dialogue for our members, we take pride standing collectively with States in their commitment to face the environmental challenges that will help to shape our future as a nation.

As our nation's vanguards, the environmental protection work performed by States unequivocally has fundamental importance in the protection of our environment, communities and families. In facing the myriad concerns with PFAS, ***States are Leading the Way*** to address this emerging contaminant based on good governance, science, and dialogue with communities at risk and at our Nation's Capital.

In support of our membership, ASTSWMO joined the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), the Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA), and the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) in submitting comments to EPA's PFAS Action Plan. Our key message - We encouraged EPA to engage States as a guide and to work with them in a timely manner to establish standards for PFAS that are scientifically defensible, and to provide adequate flexibility for States to address their unique circumstances. In addition, our organization provided comments on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Draft Interim Recommendations for Addressing Groundwater Contaminated with PFOA and PFOS. Furthermore, ASTSWMO's leadership and staff visited with Congressional staff to underscore the importance of maintaining federal funding support to State programs and to highlight PFAS as a national issue of key interest to our membership. We look forward to the new steering committee on emerging contaminants led by Steve Sliver (MI), ASTSWMO Region 5 Board Representative who will expand on the initial work of the PFAS Ad Hoc Workgroup, which was led by immediate Past-President Ken Kloo (NJ).

ASTSWMO stands as a national model for dialogue through the convergence of talented professionals from the membership who share their expertise in our Subcommittees, Focus Groups and Task Forces. These are our ***Members-in-Action***, who are dedicated, progressive and truly gifted. Words can never adequately capture that indomitable spirit of cooperation that is infused into the continuum of work being done, but the outcome is resolute - our ***Members-in-Action*** deliver only the best. The work of their hands, led by our amazing Subcommittee Chairs, is exemplified in their publications and presentations from our events, which may be accessed online in each of the Subcommittee pages located at [www.astswmo.org](http://www.astswmo.org). For an excellent summary, I also highly encourage our members to peruse through the beautiful and well-written [newsletters](#) on the webpage.

As a committed member of every community, the ***ASTSWMO Gives Back*** program recognizes and promotes the work of organizations wherever our conferences or meetings are located. This past year, we recognized and raised funds for *Youth Empowerment Services (YES)*, *Teens Grow Greens*, and *City Blossoms*. ASTSWMO Gives Back also means putting our "backs" into it! As part of our January quarterly Board Meeting, 42 Board members,

family members and ASTSWMO alumni worked with *Para La Naturaleza* in planting over 100 native trees, cleared invasive growth and collected trash at the former Roosevelt Roads Navy Base in Puerto Rico. We look forward to more opportunities to lend a hand.

In looking ahead, the ASTSWMO Board of Directors will implement the goals of the **2020-2024 ASTSWMO Strategic Plan**. Our goals are clear: ASTSWMO will: 1) Provide assistance to the membership; 2) Strengthen and develop strategic partnerships in its advocacy of member interests at the Federal level; and 3) Ensure a sustainable organization. As part of implementing Goals 1 and 2, the Board of Directors met with ASTSWMO members from the Puerto Rico Department of Environment and Natural Resources (PR DENR) and the U.S. EPA Caribbean office to discuss assisting Puerto Rico in modernizing their solid waste program.

In fulfilling our goals, ASTSWMO supports succession planning and offers one-on-one information exchange opportunities for States through our Peer Match Program. In addition, we have begun hosting *ASTSWMO 101* to new members and produced the ASTSWMO Chairperson Guidance. Moreover, we have begun integrating an opportunity for young professionals to share their views into our conferences. For example, the closing plenary session at the Hazardous Waste/Materials Management Joint Training consisted of a Young Professionals Panel that spurred a lively, interactive discussion among panelists and attendees about staff development and succession planning in the hazardous waste and materials management programs.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our members who are part of the “Silver Tsunami,” as Pat Flood (TN) described of our retiring professionals. We recognize our former members for their dedicated years of service not just to their States but to ASTSWMO as well. We extend our appreciation and best wishes to our members. Succession planning and leadership development is extremely important to ASTSWMO.

I humbly thank you, our members, for this privilege to work for you. I also thank our immediate Past-President Ken Kloof (NJ) for his guidance, current Past-President Chip Crockett (AL) for heroically navigating us through the completion of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, and Secretary-Treasurer Tim Ratsep (DE) for his insight on investment opportunities. We welcome Vice-President Brent Everett (UT), whose extensive experience and wonderful humor will further enrich our organization, and I look forward to working with our Board members who represent the voice of their respective regions.

As Chip Crockett remarked often, our organization’s success can be traced to our 57th member – the ASTSWMO staff and management. I thank and recognize our Executive Director, Dania Rodriguez, whose passion for the care and success of every ASTSWMO member is immeasurable. I also extend my appreciation to ASTSWMO’s remarkable team: Charles Reyes, Kerry Callahan, Scott Lauher, TJ Gannon, and Maria Warner, for supporting our members and being the foundation of continuity for the organization.

We have together become a family who share their lives, build homes, and help grow communities that are big and small. Our work is about the people of this nation who strive for a good future, which can be accomplished by being part of a global community working together to preserve our shared natural resources. I look forward to our work together as a family.

Sincerely,



Conchita San Nicolas Taitano, GU  
ASTSWMO President