

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Nominates Shawn LaTourette as New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced his nomination of Shawn LaTourette as the next Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. LaTourette has served as Acting Commissioner of the Department since Catherine R. McCabe announced her retirement in January 2021.

"The decisions made by the Department of Environmental Protection are not just important for today, but will have far reaching impacts across generations," **said Governor Murphy**. "The work we do now for cleaner air and water, to meaningfully combat climate change, to ensure that every community is treated with dignity and respect and that the principles of environmental justice serve us every day, will far outlive us all. Shawn's passion for environmental protection, coupled with his extensive knowledge on climate, energy, and infrastructure, will help build an environmental legacy that exemplifies these principles. I am confident that with Shawn's leadership, we will create a cleaner, more sustainable New Jersey that we are proud to leave for future generations."

"To serve the people of New Jersey as Commissioner of Environmental Protection is an honor beyond any I could have imagined, and I am grateful to Governor Murphy for his outstanding environmental leadership, and his confidence in mine," **said Acting Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette**. "New Jersey has no shortage of environmental challenges—from confronting the climate crisis to modernizing our water infrastructure—challenges that also present us with an incredible opportunity to grow our economy, lift our people, and further the promise of environmental justice. NJDEP is charting a new course for the future in our great state, with a stronger, more just environment at its center. I am eager to lead the Department in supporting Governor Murphy in his vision to make New Jersey a national model for its commitment to a more resilient, fairer, *greener* future for everyone."

With twenty years of environmental experience, LaTourette began his career partnering with the *Erin Brockovich* law firm to organize and defend New Jersey communities whose drinking water was contaminated by petrochemicals. Born and raised in New Jersey, LaTourette graduated *magna cum laude* from Rutgers University and earned his law degree *summa cum laude* from Rutgers Law School, where he was the class salutatorian and the recipient of multiple environmental and governance awards, and published scholarship on environmental law, natural resource damage, and climate issues. Before entering public service, LaTourette specialized in protecting the rights of victims of toxic injuries while also advising infrastructure, transportation, energy, and other industries on compliance with state and federal environmental laws and policies. Prior to joining the Murphy Administration, he was most recently a Director of the Environmental Law Department at Gibbons PC, where he focused on brownfields redevelopment projects and litigated environmental cases in state and federal court.

LaTourette first joined DEP as chief legal and regulatory policy advisor to Commissioner McCabe in 2018, becoming DEP's Chief of Staff in 2019 and, in 2020, the Deputy Commissioner responsible for running the operations of DEP while notably leading efforts to craft the reforms necessary to advance the Administration's climate change and environmental justice priorities.

A devoted advocate for equality of all people, LaTourette was elected to serve as Chair of the LGBTQ Rights Section of the New Jersey State Bar Association, completing his term in 2020, and will be the first openly gay Commissioner of Environmental Protection in the nation. A Middlesex County native, LaTourette resides in Highland Park with his partner and twin daughters.

"New Jersey has taken a leading role in the legal fight for environmental justice, and that's because of the close working relationship between our office and Shawn's team at DEP," **said Attorney General Gurbir Grewal**. "We share a total commitment to holding polluters accountable and making them pay for the destruction they caused. As we continue this fight for clean air and clean water, I couldn't ask for a better partner than Shawn."

"At a time when the New Jersey legislature is empty from any representation for the LGBTQ community, this appointment is welcomed and appreciated. It speaks to Governor Murphy's commitment to diverse inclusion in our government and also positions New Jersey as the only state in the nation with more than one LGBTQ cabinet member," **said Christian Fuscarino, Executive Director of Garden State Equality**. "Highly qualified LGBTQ people like Shawn are ready to step up and serve in leadership positions in the Garden State. We are confident that Shawn will lead with professionalism based on his impressive record while at DEP."

"When Shawn LaTourette puts his mind to something, he gets it done," **said Kim Gaddy, Clean Water Action NJ and National Environmental Justice Director**. "We've seen it happen with the passage of the 2020 EJ law. Now we need the most aggressive EJ and climate pollutant policies implemented as if our life depends on it, because it does. We need to make sure no more burdens come to Black, Brown and lower income communities like mine and we look forward to working with the new NJDEP commissioner to make it so!"

"New Jersey Future congratulates Shawn LaTourette on his nomination for Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection," **said Peter Kasabach, Executive Director, New Jersey Future**. "His strong focus and support for climate change adaptation, combined with his understanding of the importance of water infrastructure will enable the department to accelerate its work in making New Jersey a more resilient and healthier state for all of our residents, especially those in historically overburdened communities, while also encouraging economic development in our urban areas and in the coastal and riverine places that are out of harm's way."

"Congratulations to Mr. LaTourette on his "new" role. He has had his sleeves rolled up over the past four years with bold actions like the development of the Energy Master Plan and other pro-conservation initiatives," **said Ed Potosnak, Executive Director, New Jersey LCV**. "We look forward to working with Commissioner LaTourette to accomplish the Murphy administration's goals of 100% clean energy by 2050, creating a post-COVID green jobs recovery, and fulfilling our commitment to environmental justice and helping overburdened communities of color."

"New Jersey Audubon congratulates Acting-Commissioner LaTourette and looks forward to collaborating on the advancement of science-based wildlife and habitat conservation and environmental protection," **said Eric Stiles**,

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	(/governor/news/appointments)		
	Advice and Consent		
	Appointments		
	(/governor/news/acappointments)		
	Statements on		
	Legislation		
	(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)		
	Administration Reports		
	(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)		
	Transition Reports		
	(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)		
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