

Governor Phil Murphy

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

01/12/2021

TRENTON - Governor Phil Murphy today announced that Shawn LaTourette will serve as Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) beginning on January 16. LaTourette, currently the Department's Deputy Commissioner, takes the helm from Catherine R. McCabe, who will retire from public service on January 15 having spent more than 40 years protecting the environment, including three years as DEP Commissioner. LaTourette will serve as Acting Commissioner until a permanent replacement for McCabe is identified.

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, he resides in Highland Park with his partner and twin daughters.

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