

DNREC Secretary O'Mara Recruited to Lead National Wildlife Federation

*Will conclude successful tenure at agency in July while
maintaining residency in Delaware*

Dover – Secretary Collin O'Mara will conclude a five and a half year tenure leading Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) in July, after the completion of the Delaware General Assembly Session, when he will become President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF).

"Collin has earned our respect and gratitude for his service to our state, which has been marked by a tireless work ethic and commitment to improving our environment and the health of Delawareans," said Governor Jack Markell. "When he moves on in July, he will leave a strong and capable team prepared to build on a legacy of remarkable improvements to the quality of life in our state, including huge reductions in air pollution and impressive upgrades in our ability to deal with major storms. Collin's leadership has helped make Delaware a nationally recognized leader in energy and climate change policies. While we will be sad to see him leave the administration, the National Wildlife Federation has made a great choice for its next leader."

Secretary O'Mara was appointed as the nation's youngest cabinet secretary by Markell in 2009. During this administration, DNREC has focused on addressing Delaware's most pressing environmental challenges, including conserving and restoring wildlife and fisheries habitat, improving air quality and public health, ensuring access to clean water, expanding outdoor recreation and environmental education

opportunities, and enhancing the state's resilience to extreme weather and other climate impacts.

"For the past 5 years I have fallen in love with the remarkable natural resources across our state," said O'Mara. "I'm proud of the work of our team at DNREC has done under the Governor's leadership to clean up our air, water and soils, conserve and restore critical habitat, expand recreational opportunities and prepare our state for storms and other climate threats. I'm looking forward to promoting the common-sense solutions that we've advanced in Delaware across the nation to protect wildlife and fishery habitat, expand environmental education, and address climate change."

Key accomplishments advancing Governor Markell's environmental agenda include:

- **Air Quality:** Reduced air emissions more than any other state, overseeing the shutdown or fuel switching or controlling of all ten of the dirtiest power plant units in Delaware. As chair of the Ozone Transport Commission, led the multi-state effort to encourage EPA to further reduce cross-state pollution.
- **Statewide Universal Recycling:** Spearheaded Governor Markell's initiative to make Delaware a national leader in recycling through universal access to curbside recycling.
- **Delaware Bayshore Initiative:** Building upon the legacy of conservation and the Coastal Zone Act, launched an initiative to conserve and restore wildlife habitat, expand access to low-impact recreation experiences, and strengthen local communities throughout the world-class Bayshore habitat from New Castle to Lewes.
- **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative:** As chair, led the modernization of the RGGI cap, reducing it by 45% and creating a national model that is now being touted as

the best system to comply with EPA's upcoming rule for regulating greenhouse gases for existing power plants.

- **Clean Energy and Efficiency:** Helped establish Delaware as a leading state in the deployment of solar technology, including an increase in deployment of nearly 30 times (from 2 MW in 2008 to 58+ MW today) and the 7th most solar per capita. Strengthened building codes and worked with the Sustainable Energy Utility to spur more than \$100 million in efficiency upgrades across the state.
- **Clean Water:** Strengthened regulations governing stormwater management and on-site wastewater systems. Led the investment of more than \$150 million in water infrastructure upgrades and helped launch the Governor's Clean Water for Delaware's Future initiative.
- **Children in Nature:** Launched a comprehensive effort to introduce more children to the outdoors and expand environmental education.
- **Trails and Pathways:** Oversaw implementation of the Governor's First State Trails and Pathways Initiative which has significantly expanded Delaware's trail network and made the state among the most bikable and walkable in the nation.
- **Climate Preparedness and Resilience:** Led a statewide effort to analyze the science, development policy recommendations, and deploy projects to improve the state's preparedness for extreme storms, sea level rise, and other climate impacts. Co-chaired the Natural Resources and Agriculture Subcommittee of the President's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience.
- **Organizational Improvements:** Reorganized DNREC around the functional themes of natural resource management and

environmental compliance, achieved the Governor's goals for permitting efficiency, increased attention on energy and climate issues, and centralized a number of administrative support functions.

NWF, which is America's largest conservation organization with 48 state affiliates and more than 4.5 million members and supporters, recruited O'Mara to lead the non-profit following the retirement of Larry Schweiger earlier this year.

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