

Secretary of the Environment to Step Down

Written by Jay Apperson

Monday, 29 December 2014 21:24 -

BALTIMORE, MD (Dec. 23, 2014) – Robert M. Summers, Ph.D., Secretary of the Environment for the State of Maryland, announced last week that he will resign from his position, effective Jan. 6, 2015

Secretary Summers' resignation will mark the end of more than three decades of State service. Deputy Secretary David A. Costello has agreed to accept the position of Interim Secretary of the Department of the Environment, effective upon Secretary Summers' departure.

"Thanks to the dedication and hard work of MDE staff, we have accomplished much in all areas of the environment," said Secretary Summers. "I know that the citizens of Maryland highly value and need the work that we do at MDE."

In a message to MDE staff this morning, Secretary Summers added: "Please keep up your good work and continue to encourage and support each other as together you *'protect and restore the quality of Maryland's air, water, and land resources, while fostering smart growth, a thriving and sustainable economy and healthy communities.'*

You have all been terrific to work with, are clearly dedicated to the service of Maryland's citizens and have a great deal of expertise in your fields. Your continued hard work is essential to the success of the new Administration and to the long-term prosperity of Marylander's health and the environment."

Secretary Summers has served the citizens of Maryland for over 31 years in various capacities with Maryland's progressive and nationally recognized environmental programs, with an emphasis on scientific and technical issues related to water pollution control, drinking water protection and federal, State and local government environmental laws and regulations. Throughout his career, he has been a key contributor to the multi-jurisdictional Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.

Secretary Summers received his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from the Johns Hopkins University in 1982. He began his State career in 1983 at the Office of Environmental Programs at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. At the Department of the Environment, he served as the Director of the Technical and Regulatory Services Administration and the Water Management Administration before being appointed Deputy Secretary in 2007.

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He served as Acting Secretary starting in December 2010, and was appointed Secretary by Governor Martin O'Malley in April 2011.

Under Secretary Summers' leadership, the Department of the Environment has worked with Governor O'Malley and the legislature to put new laws, regulations and funding in place to:

- Restore and protect water quality in Maryland's groundwater, wetlands, streams, rivers and reservoirs and Chesapeake Bay;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to sea level rise due to climate change;
- Reduce emissions of nitrogen, sulfur and mercury by more than 80 percent from the State's power plants;
- Redevelop brownfields by cleaning up historically contaminated properties, including Sparrows Point and Harbor Point in Baltimore City and many more sites across Maryland;

- Work toward ensuring that no more Maryland children are poisoned by lead from paint in their own homes; and
- Prepare for consideration by the next Administration what are arguably the most protective standards in the world to prevent impacts to public health and the environment from shale gas development.

With his resignation from the position of Secretary of the Environment, Secretary Summers will retire from State service.

Deputy Secretary Costello was appointed to his position as Deputy Secretary for Policy and Planning for the Department of the Environment in September 2011. He has more than 20 years of experience in State, local and federal government and international agencies. He previously served as Director of Governor O'Malley's Delivery Unit, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Planning and Director of the Maryland Office of Smart Growth. He is a graduate of the George Washington University and the London School of Economics and Political Science.