

HARRISBURG, Pa., Sept. 20, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Governor Tom Corbett today nominated Ellen M. Ferretti as Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and E. Christopher Abruzzo as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Ferretti, of Dallas, Luzerne County, had been serving as deputy secretary for parks and forestry until she was named acting secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in June.

Abruzzo, of Hershey, Dauphin County, was serving as Corbett's deputy chief of staff until he was appointed acting secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in April.

"Christopher and Ellen have served several months in the capacity of acting secretary of their respective departments, and in both cases we have seen each of them earn the respect of people both inside and outside of the agencies," Corbett said. "Each embody the commitment and dedication to protecting and conserving our environment and natural resources, which is a top priority of my administration and the people of Pennsylvania."

"Ellen has devoted much of her career toward the development, promotion and protection of our state parks and forest lands. That experience and insight will make her an excellent secretary," Corbett said. "She understands the unique qualities of our state park and forest systems. I am confident the citizens of Pennsylvania will benefit from her continued stewardship of our public lands."

With respect to Abruzzo, Corbett said, "Chris has served the citizens of Pennsylvania with distinction, both as a prosecuting attorney and as a member of my executive staff. As deputy chief of staff, Chris played instrumental roles in many of my environmental initiatives, including enhanced protective standards for oil and gas development, implementing the permit decision

guarantee, and refocusing the agency on job number one: protecting the environment. The citizens of Pennsylvania will continue to benefit from his pragmatic, balanced approach to problem-solving."

Ferretti, 56, has more than 20 years of experience working to protect the state's natural resources, having served as the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's director of its northeast regional office, where she worked closely with DCNR and its partners on landscape conservation.

In addition, Ferretti has served as director of Environmental Resources at Borton-Lawson Engineering; as a land protection specialist for The Nature Conservancy; and as a project manager at Westinghouse Environmental and Geotechnical Services, Inc.

A graduate of Wilkes College with a degree in environmental science and biology, Ferretti has completed numerous continuing education courses on conservation, environmental assessments, redevelopment, forest stewardship, trail, park and recreational planning.

Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition Executive Director Andrew Heath endorsed the governor's nomination of Ferretti.

"We congratulate Ellen Ferretti on her nomination," Heath said. "Her leadership and expertise, coupled with her commitment to Pennsylvania's natural resources, make her a strong choice to head DCNR."

"Ms. Ferretti has a proven record in caring for the commonwealth's rich natural resources and the coalition looks forward to working with her to ensure continued and enhanced funding for parks, recreation, trails and green spaces throughout the state," Heath said.

As deputy chief of staff, Abruzzo, 46, was responsible for overseeing the activities of nearly 20 state agencies and commissions, including DEP and DCNR. He brings 20 years of public service experience to DEP. He previously served in the state Attorney General's office

prosecuting and supervising cases involving white collar crime, drug investigation and Medicaid fraud.

In addition to his role in state government, Abruzzo has served for six years with the Derry Township Board of Supervisors and the Derry Township Municipal Authority, which oversees the township's wastewater systems, interceptor lines, sewage treatment plant, and the treatment and disposal of industrial waste.

While chairman of the authority in 2010 and 2011, Abruzzo was instrumental in directing the township's response to flooding caused by catastrophic storm events Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

Abruzzo's local government experience gives him a unique understanding of the many issues and challenges that municipalities encounter as they strive to implement best practices and meet environmental standards and regulations.

A graduate of St. Joseph's University, Abruzzo earned his law degree from the Widener University School of Law.

"Township supervisors are known for their common sense and pragmatic and balanced approach to problem solving and Chris Abruzzo, chairman of the Derry Township Board of Supervisors, will bring these important skills with him as the permanent head of the state Department of Environmental Protection," Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors Executive Director David Sanko said.

"We applaud Chris' nomination as DEP secretary because he not only understands what Pennsylvania's local governments need from DEP, like stormwater and wastewater issues, but he also understands what Pennsylvania

needs from its leaders: reliability, honesty and integrity.

Chris Abruzzo

brings all of this and more to the table."

Paul King, president of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, issued the following statement supporting both of Corbett's two nominees:

"The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) is pleased that Governor Corbett has announced that he is appointing acting secretaries Abruzzo and Ferretti as permanent members of his cabinet.

"The PEC has worked well with both individuals and has found them committed to the missions of the agencies. We appreciate Governor Corbett naming two thoughtful stewards of the environment and we look forward to continuing our work with them. Ellen Ferretti was a PEC vice president in our

Wilkes-Barre

office before joining DCNR. We encourage the Senate to approve both promptly at this critical time."

The nominations now go to the state Senate for its consideration.

For more information, visit www.pa.gov .

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