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Governor Ron DeSantis Appoints Shawn Hamilton as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced his appointment of Emile D. “Shawn” Hamilton as Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Shawn has been serving as Interim Secretary since June 2021.

“I am pleased to appoint Shawn Hamilton as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “Secretary Hamilton brings a strong, proven record of environmental stewardship and management of award-winning state parks and conservation lands. I am confident in his ability to continue leading DEP and building on the foundations laid before him in our mission to protect and restore Florida’s environment and natural resources.”

“It is an honor and pleasure to be asked to serve as Secretary under Governor DeSantis, who has made the environment a top priority,” said **DEP Secretary Shawn Hamilton**. “Having served at DEP for 13 years, I have seen first-hand the historic advancements that have been made, and the unprecedented resources that have been secured for the protection of the environment, especially under Governor DeSantis’ leadership. I look forward to furthering the agency’s mission and advancing the Governor’s environmental priorities.”

“Shawn Hamilton has earned the appointment as the next Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection,” said **Eric Eikenberg, CEO of The Everglades Foundation**. “Shawn is a proven leader with extensive public and environmental policy experience. We are excited to work with him. There’s no doubt that Secretary Hamilton will continue to carry out Governor DeSantis’ bold vision to restore America’s Everglades and better Florida’s environmental resources.”

“Audubon has been pleased with Secretary Hamilton’s interim leadership and we are glad to see his role made permanent,” said **Julie Wraithmell, Executive Director of Audubon Florida**. “Not only does he bring long experience at regional and state levels of DEP, but his background spans DEP priorities from regulatory oversight to state land

management. DEP is a big agency with big responsibilities and we're glad to see someone with Shawn's talents and experience chosen for the role."

"We are excited that fellow outdoorsman Shawn Hamilton has been made permanent Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection," said **Captain Daniel Andrews, Co-Founder & Executive Director of Captains for Clean Water**. "We look forward to working with Secretary Hamilton to restore and protect Florida's aquatic ecosystems for the use and enjoyment of all."

"The Nature Conservancy in Florida gives its full support to interim Secretary Shawn Hamilton as the permanent Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection," said **Temperince Morgan, Executive Director, The Nature Conservancy in Florida**. "Secretary Hamilton demonstrates a true understanding of the science and data that facilitates sound conservation principles for all Floridians. We have a decades-long relationship with DEP and look forward to the future and innovative implementation of conservation that benefits our residents, our visitors, our economy, and our environment."

"We applaud the appointment of Shawn Hamilton as Secretary of Florida Department of Environmental Protection," said **Dawn Sherriffs, Florida Director of the Environmental Defense Fund**. "Shawn's tenured service at DEP and tireless commitment to the protection of Florida's natural resources will serve the Sunshine State well as we face climate change, water quality and other challenges. We look forward to continuing to work with Secretary Hamilton on solutions for our environment and economy."

"I have had the opportunity to work closely with Shawn and am confident he is the right choice for this position," said **Eric Sutton, Executive Director of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**. "Shawn is a natural leader with strong communications skills. He uses his years of experience along with listening to stakeholders and experts to make quality decisions, and I look forward to our continued work together."

"Florida is lucky to have a true public servant like Secretary Hamilton at DEP's helm," said **Noah Valenstein, Senior Advisor for the American Flood Coalition and Presidential Fellow for The Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University and Former DEP Secretary**. "His love for Florida's natural resources and focus on resiliency is a perfect complement to the Governor's bold agenda on the environment."

"We are so excited to have Shawn Hamilton continue as Secretary of DEP," said **Kellie Ralston, Southeast Fisheries Policy Director for the American Sportfishing Association**. "Shawn has the experience and leadership skills to ensure Florida continues its responsible stewardship of our state's environment and precious natural resources. Shawn is an excellent choice by Governor DeSantis, and we look forward to working with him in his permanent role."

"Shawn is a tremendous leader and public servant who will help ensure all stakeholders are working together to protect Florida's natural resources," said **John Hoblick,**

President of the Florida Farm Bureau Federation. “The agricultural community looks forward to working with him to protect Florida’s environment and economy.”

“Secretary Hamilton is a proven leader on issues that impact everyday Floridians,” said **Melissa Roberts, Executive Director of the American Flood Coalition.** “His work planning for the impacts of sea level rise and flooding is a critical part of implementing the landmark 'Always Ready' legislation and the Governor’s bold vision for tackling Florida’s flooding challenges.”

“I am truly excited about the appointment of Shawn Hamilton,” said **Chief Science Officer Mark Rains.** “Over these past few months, I have grown to trust in his knowledge, judgement, and leadership, as well as his overall commitment to sound and balanced environmental stewardship. I look forward to building on this foundation as we continue to work towards employing science to protect and restore our waterways.”

“Shawn Hamilton’s experience in the DEP and working on behalf of our environment will be a great asset,” said **Michael Parsons, Ph.D., Professor of Marine Science, Director of Vester Field Station in The Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University, and member of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force.** “I look forward to partnering with him on our water quality and harmful algal bloom issues. Governor DeSantis has made a wise choice in selecting Shawn for this post.”

Secretary Hamilton has served at DEP for 13 years, most recently as Interim Secretary since June 2021 and previously as Deputy Secretary of Lands and Recreation since February 2020. As Deputy Secretary of Land and Recreation, Secretary Hamilton provided oversight of Florida’s 12 million acres of public lands; oversaw 175 state parks, trails, and historic sites with an annual budget of \$391 million; and led 1,160 full-time employees. He also served as Director of the Northwest District from January 2011-February 2020. In this role, Secretary Hamilton ensured the effective and efficient implementation of permitting, compliance, and enforcement responsibilities for the regulatory program areas under district authority.

Prior to his time with DEP, Secretary Hamilton spent 20 years in the United States Air Force as an Avionics Element Superintendent for the Alabama Air National Guard’s 187th Fighter Wing. His responsibilities included the continuous preparation and deployment of war fighter resources in support of United States military contingencies and humanitarian missions. He proudly served his country in the Iraq War and Operation Enduring Freedom where he was responsible for coordinating mission critical fighter aircraft maintenance.

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