

Governor Northam Appoints Ann Jennings as Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources



“Virginia’s water and air are cleaner today because we have made historic investments in Virginia’s natural resources over the past four years,” said Governor Northam. “We have secured more funding for the Chesapeake Bay than any previous administration. We are all-in for clean energy, with the country’s largest offshore wind development rising off the coast of Virginia Beach. We are breaking new ground in coastal resilience and environmental justice. Ann Jennings has been a leader in this work, and as Secretary, she will make sure Virginia continues this momentum.”

Jennings has served as the Deputy Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources with primary responsibility for the Chesapeake Bay. She also has served as the Virginia Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative commission created to advise the General Assemblies of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia on matters of Bay-wide concern.

The appointment comes as the Chesapeake Executive Council prepares to meet in Virginia Beach next week. The Council includes the governors of the six watershed states, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The panel establishes the policy direction to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay.

Before joining state government, Jennings served as the Virginia Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Her career also includes work as a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Originally from Virginia Beach, Jennings received a bachelor’s degree in biology from Virginia Tech and a master’s degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences from Texas A&M University. She is a graduate of the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute and the Sorenson Institute’s Political Leaders Program.

Matt Strickler, the outgoing Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, is pursuing new opportunities where he will continue his excellent work of protecting our nation’s resources. He began working with the Governor in 2008 as a legislative assistant in the office of then-state

Senator Northam. Strickler had served on the cabinet since Governor Northam took office in 2018.

"We will miss Secretary Strickler, and wish him well in his future endeavors," said Governor Northam. "I want to thank Matt for all that he has done for the people of the Commonwealth while serving in this administration. His work to clean up Virginia's air and water over the last four years has directly benefited the health, wellbeing, and lives of all who reside here."