

Evers vows quick replacement for Payne after DNR secretary abruptly announces resignation

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Gov. Tony Evers spokesperson Britt Cudaback tells WisPolitics the gov will work “expeditiously” to find a replacement for DNR Secretary Adam Payne, who will step down Nov. 1.

Payne in a resignation letter to Gov. Tony Evers on Friday said he would leave his position next week after less than a year on the job, saying he wants to spend more time with his aging parents and grandchildren.

The decision comes after the state Senate rejected four of Evers’ appointees to the Natural Resources Board. Evers replaced the members with new appointees almost immediately afterward.

Payne, appointed in January, had yet to be confirmed or receive a committee vote after a March hearing before the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee.

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Chair Rob Cowles told WisPolitics he was “very surprised” by the news. The Green Bay Republican said he had expected both the committee and the full Senate to approve Payne’s nomination, despite what he called a “dustup” over PFAS.

Cowles said he thought Payne would be able to transcend political polarization considering his personality and “ability to talk to anybody.” Cowles joined Dems in voting to approve the NRB appointees the Senate rejected last week.

Cowles noted he had a good relationship with Payne, who he said has excellent management and personal skills.

“I expected to have an excellent working relationship with him, while also knowing that I would not agree with him on everything and he would not agree with everything that I would want,” Cowles said.

See Payne’s resignation letter [here](#).