

October 20, 2023

Dear Governor Evers,

This letter serves as formal notice of my resignation from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, effective at the end of the day on November 1, 2023. After three decades of public service, I will retire in the new year.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve with you as your Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, as well as work with so many talented and passionate DNR employees. I also enjoyed meeting and working with so many thoughtful people, including your very talented cabinet, tribal leaders, environmental and conservation associations, the Natural Resources Board, landowners, businesses, and local, state, and federal officials. Suffice it to say, I made some new friends, and am so grateful for the kindness and support that I received.

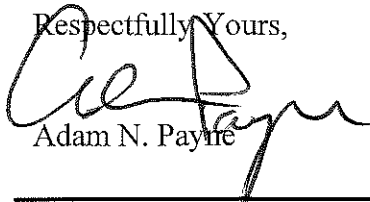
I was pleased and proud to help advocate for many of your key priorities, including water quality, parks, personnel, and providing more support for local units of government. Thanks to your leadership, key investments were made in all these areas. I was particularly grateful the budget provided additional resources that will help us respond more effectively to water pollution, including PFAS, nitrates, phosphorus, and lead, and for the \$125 million put into a trust fund to help people and communities in need combat PFAS. The targeted increases in public safety for our firefighters and conservation wardens will no doubt better position the DNR to recruit and retain staff. And the historic investment in our state park system will help us more responsibly maintain and improve our infrastructure. It was also very gratifying to see the start of the clean-up and restoration of the Milwaukee Estuary – a tremendous example of collaboration, and after two decades, the development of a new wolf management plan.

As you frequently said, we must work harder to connect the dots. I made it a priority to bolster opportunities for engaging our youth in the great outdoors, hunters' safety, and strengthening our mentorship programs. We also worked to further engage and support our new Office of Agriculture and Water Quality. I am excited about the future and seeing the department strengthen our relationship with local farmer-led groups and other key stakeholders.

This is bittersweet, but the past year really helped put into better focus what is most important to me. After a very fulfilling career in public service, 24 years at Sheboygan County alone, I need to spend more quality time with my aging parents and support my wife's role as a caregiver. I also want to spend more time with our four young grandchildren and focus more attention on my personal health and well-being.

All the best to you, your family and administration. I am grateful for your leadership and friendship.

Respectfully Yours,



Adam N. Payne