

# DES assistant commissioner resigns, leaving for private sector

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Mark Sanborn was confirmed as assistant commissioner at DES in August 2021. (Dana Wormald | New Hampshire Bulletin)

The second-highest ranking environmental regulator in the state has resigned and will leave for the private sector.

Mark Sanborn, assistant commissioner at the state's Department of Environmental Services, notified the

Executive Council of his resignation Wednesday. His last day with the state will be Oct. 5.



Mark Sanborn, the assistant commissioner at the Department of Environmental Services, has resigned from his position effective Oct. 5. (Courtesy)

Sanborn was confirmed as assistant commissioner at DES in August 2021, after serving as the governor’s energy adviser at the then-new Department of Energy. Prior, he was a federal liaison for the state Department of Transportation and worked under the Trump administration at the departments of Housing and Urban Development and Agriculture.

In an interview with the Bulletin, Sanborn said he is leaving for a private sector opportunity he “could not pass up.” He will join North and South Construction Services in Newington, where he’ll do government relations and permitting.

Sanborn is leaving eight months into his recent reappointment, which runs through January 2027.

The Department of Environmental Services came under fire at the end of this past legislative session when emails surfaced suggesting that Sanborn and Michael Wimsatt, director of the Waste Management Division at DES, consulted on edits and language in Senate Bill 61 with Bryan Gould, a lawyer and previously a lobbyist for Casella, the solid waste management company seeking to build a new landfill in the North Country.

The much-debated bill related to landfill siting was ultimately killed by the House of Representatives, and opponents cited the perceived influence of waste management lobbyists and state agencies over lawmakers.

Wimsatt told the Concord Monitor in June that DES exchanged ideas and ran things by “all the parties that have interest,” and that characterizing the agency as asking permission from Casella “is completely false and misleading.”

Asked by the Bulletin if his departure was at all related, Sanborn said there is “absolutely no connection” between his resignation and SB 61.

“The governor’s office asked us to represent the executive branch point of view on legislation and the Legislature made a decision,” he said.

Sanborn added that DES has “moved on” from the now-dead legislation to the mandatory rulemaking process associated with the Waste Management Division. DES’ current solid waste management rules expire next year, and the agency has been embarking on a public process to revise them.

Gov. Chris Sununu will have to nominate someone to replace Sanborn, subject to approval by the Executive Council.