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Gov. Whitmer Announces Cabinet, Agency Leadership to Begin Second Term

LANSING, Mich. -- Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced selections to lead state departments and state agencies into the next four years. The governor also announced promotions for staff in the executive office.

"When we took office four years ago, we set out to make Michigan a home for opportunity for everyone. None of us could've anticipated the challenges thrown our way, but our team stood Michigan strong and never gave up doing what was right for Michiganders. For that, I'm grateful to the entire cabinet for their service during our first term," said **Governor Whitmer**. "With a new term, comes new opportunities and challenges. Today's appointments and promotions will only build on the work that we've done over the last four years. We know it won't be easy, but it will be gratifying when we build a state that enables every Michigander to succeed."

The governor has selected Dan Eichinger as acting director of the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE); Michelle Lange as director of the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB); Adam Hollier as director of the Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA); Brian Hanna as executive director of the Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA); Brad Wieferich as acting director of the Department of Transportation (MDOT); Kathy Angerer as acting director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD); and Shannon Lott as acting director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"Governor Whitmer starts her second term with the wind at her back - a decisive election victory and her party in control of the legislature," said Sandy Baruah, Detroit Regional Chamber. "As is customary, the Governor is realigning her key officers for the work ahead. The Detroit Regional Chamber wish the Governor and her team success as they conduct the people's business. The Chamber looks forward to working together whenever possible."

"For Michigan to grow jobs, win new investments and ensure widely shared prosperity, strong, strategic leaders will be essential," said Jeff Donofrio, President, and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan. "We look forward to working with these new directors to help Michigan compete to win."

Dan Eichinger, Acting Director of EGLE

Dan Eichinger will serve as the acting director of EGLE. Dan is currently the director at the Department of Natural Resources, where he has served since 2019. Before entering the administration, Dan was the executive director of Michigan United Conservation Clubs, where he helped re-establish MUCC as a driving force for conserving Michigan's natural resources and outdoor heritage. Eichinger earned a bachelor's degree and a Master of Science in fisheries and wildlife from Michigan State University. He also obtained a Master of Public Administration from Central Michigan University.

"The work of everyone at EGLE can positively impact every citizen in this state and the natural resources we hold dear," said **incoming Acting EGLE Director Dan Eichinger**. "I appreciate Governor Whitmer's confidence in me to work with the talented and innovative team here as we build programs and systems that protect the wellbeing of our state and citizens today and into the future. I am personally grateful to Director Clark who is a positive, people-first leader and a first-class friend who has accomplished a great deal during her tenure."

Under Liesl Clark's leadership, EGLE played a lead role in the state's response to historic floods and high water levels; effectively managed record-breaking, bipartisan investments in water infrastructure; established the state's first drinking water standards for PFAS; guided the City of Flint in establishing a backup water supply; and supported the City of Benton Harbor as it replaced its lead service lines in less than one year. Clark also helped develop and launch the MI Healthy Climate Plan to create jobs, lower energy costs, and advance equity while putting Michigan on the path to carbon-neutrality.

"Serving with my dedicated, hard-working EGLE colleagues and seeing first-hand their passion and commitment to Michigan's people and natural resources has been a true privilege," said **Liesl Clark**. "I thank Governor Whitmer for the opportunity to help lead the agency and create exciting momentum around urgent priorities like climate change, environmental justice, safe drinking water, and protecting the Great Lakes. I am proud of what we have accomplished together over the past four years and excited about the opportunities ahead to build a more healthy and environmentally sustainable future for Michigan."

"Governor Whitmer's first term was marked by several groundbreaking victories," said **Christy McGillivray, Political and Legislative Director for Sierra Club Michigan**. "These include significant investments in drinking and wastewater infrastructure and the significant commitments to mitigating climate change in the MI Healthy Climate Plan. Sierra Club is excited to build on these successes in Governor Whitmer's next four years with new team members, especially with the opportunity we have now to go farther with a pro-environment state legislature."

Adam Hollier, Director of MVAA

Adam Hollier will lead the MVAA as the new director. He is currently serving his 2nd term in the Michigan Senate. Representing the 2nd Senate district, Hollier serves Wayne County including Detroit, the Grosse

Pointes, Hamtramck, Harper Woods and Highland Park. Hollier served as a volunteer firefighter before enlisting in the U.S. Army and graduating with distinction from officer candidate school, where he earned the commission of 2nd Lieutenant. He currently serves as a captain paratrooper and team leader in the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion Airborne. Hollier was named to Michigan Chronicle's 40 under 40 in 2013 and Crain's 20 in their 20s in 2015. Hollier earned a bachelor's in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University where he played safety on the varsity football team and was a decathlete. He received a master's in urban planning from the University of Michigan.

"As someone who has taken the call to serve my country in the armed services, I feel blessed to answer this call to serve my state and my fellow servicemembers at the same time," said **incoming MVAA Director Adam Hollier**. "I am excited to make Michigan the most inviting and supportive state for Servicemembers and their families. We want to make sure every person is able to receive the benefits they have earned."

Under Director Zaneta Adams' guidance, the MVAA has vastly expanded its outreach and service to Michigan veterans. The department has delivered a record-setting \$10.9 million in state-appropriated grants in this year for veteran support, and another \$1.8 million in grants from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, a public-private partnership. They've expanded the veterans 24/7 call center (1-800-MICH-VET), which connects Michigan veterans with the benefits and resources they earned for their service. The call center increased from 13,312 in FY19 to 28,444 in FY22 – a 114% increase. The department also dramatically increased partnerships with employers and educational institutions across Michigan to improve veteran support.

"It has been my honor to serve the veterans of this state for the past three and a half years," said **MVAA Director Zaneta Adams**. "My goal when I took on this role was to bring more awareness of the resources available to veterans, to receive additional funding to support them and to bring more stakeholders to the table. With the support of the Whitmer administration and the Legislature, and with a great team backing me at the MVAA, I believe I have done that and more. I leave this role knowing that I have left the agency in a good place."

"The American Legion would like to thank Director Adams of the Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency for her dedication and work on behalf of the Veterans of the State of Michigan. She has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of the over 550,000 Veterans in the State Of Michigan," said **American Legion State of Michigan Commander, Marlyn Britton**. "The American Legion also would like to congratulate the new Director of the Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency, Senator Adam Hollier. We look forward to working with him as partners to continue to improve the lives of Veterans and lowering the alarming high rate of Veteran Suicides."

"We wish her the best of luck in whatever new endeavors she pursues and look forward to working with the new Director. She has challenged the Veteran Service Groups and community to reach out and engage whatever support was necessary in the name of helping veterans," said **Jim Sigmon, 2nd Vice Chair of the Michigan Commander's Group**.

"Adam Hollier is a tenacious leader who will bring the same work ethic he has shown through a career of service as a US Army Paratrooper, Fire Fighter and State Senator. I know he will work day and night to support our military families and I'm excited to have him as a partner to make Michigan the most supportive state for our Veterans and their families," said **State Representative Sarah Anthony**. "We have every confidence in his ability to lead MVAA through its next chapter. Our heartfelt thanks goes to Zaneta Adams for her leadership and for helping the MVAA expand its outreach to veterans across our state."

Michelle Lange, Director of DTMB

Michelle Lange will serve as director of DTMB. Michelle has held key leadership positions within DTMB in recent years, including chief deputy director, director of executive direction and operations, chief of staff

to the director, and as the department legislative liaison. Lange has worked under both Republican and Democratic governors, serving for Governor Whitmer under the chief operating officer and for Governor Rick Snyder as deputy director of Legislative Affairs. She also served as a judge on the Michigan Tax Tribunal and spent 12 years as a staff member in the Michigan Senate. Lange has both a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a Juris Doctor from Michigan State University.

“I am excited for the opportunity to continue leading this team of experienced and dedicated professionals who work to help, connect, and solve the issues of the day,” said **DTMB Director Michelle Lange**. “Michigan's families, communities, and small business are counting on us to provide top-notch administrative services to state departments, ensuring they can keep getting the job done for all.”

Over the last few years, DTMB has adapted to historic challenges, including shifting a majority of the state’s workforce to remote work. They also saved taxpayer dollars by implementing energy reduction goals set forth in Governor Whitmer’s MI Healthy Climate Plan. They successfully reduced state facility energy usage by 59% and broke ground on the state’s first every solar array project. DTMB was also recognized as one of the best in the nation for government technology and purchasing operations, taking home the top honor awarded by the National Association of State Procurement Officials and receiving an “A” grade in the Center for Digital Government’s Digital States Survey.

Brian Hanna, Executive Director of CRA

Brian Hanna will move from acting executive director to executive director at CRA. Hanna spent five years with the CRA as the manager of field operations, inspections, and investigations. He has a law enforcement and military background, having previously worked as a criminal intelligence manager and analyst with Michigan State Police and as a Deputy Sheriff for Kalamazoo County. He also served as a Captain in the United States Army Reserve with a combat deployment to Afghanistan from 2010-2011. Hanna holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from Western Michigan University and an associate degree in law enforcement from Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

“In my previous experience with the agency, I developed a deep appreciation for what makes the Michigan cannabis industry and CRA so special,” said **CRA Executive Director Brian Hanna**. “I am excited to serve the residents of Michigan in this role and am honored to work with Governor Whitmer during her next term. My commitment to the CRA, and its many stakeholders, is to stay laser focused on establishing Michigan as the national model for cannabis regulations. I am lucky to lead such a fine team that works very hard to serve this legitimate industry and its consumers.”

The Cannabis Regulatory Agency quickly established Michigan as one of the top cannabis markets in the country by efficiently and effectively implementing the medical marijuana licensing statute passed by the state legislature in 2016 and the adult-use marijuana licensing ballot proposal passed by the voters in 2018. With streamlined licensing and regulation in place, Michigan’s cannabis industry has experienced rapid growth with 3,100 licenses issued, over 28,000 well-paying jobs created, and over \$500 million in tax revenue generated over the past three years.

“Brian Hanna is the right choice to lead the CRA,” said **Shelly Edgerton, Board Chair of the Michigan Cannabis Manufacturers Association**. “His expertise in law enforcement, military background, and entrepreneurial spirit will serve the agency well as it looks to meet new goals in the future. We are excited to see all he will accomplish.”

Brad Wieferich, Acting Director of MDOT

Brad Wieferich will assume the role of acting director of MDOT. He is currently the chief operations officer of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), overseeing MDOT's seven regions, the Bureau of Development, the Bureau of Field Services, and the Bureau of Bridges and Structures. Prior to his appointment in May 2022, Wieferich was the director of MDOT's Bureau of Development (2015-2022), the Engineer of Design from (2009-2015), and held positions in the Bay, University, and Southwest regions (1995-2009). Wieferich has played a vital role in the advancement of the Gordie Howe

International Bridge, the governor's Rebuilding Michigan Program, and the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. A registered professional engineer, Wieferich earned a Bachelor of Science from the College of Engineering at Michigan State University.

Under Director Ajegba's leadership, Michigan fixed 16,000 lane miles of road and 1,200 bridges while supporting 89,000 jobs, all without raising taxes by a dime. This included key economic corridors under Governor Whitmer's \$3.5 billion Rebuilding Michigan Plan, record investments across four state budgets, and the bipartisan Building Michigan Together Plan supplemental package. The director broke countless barriers over his 30-year-plus career at MDOT and ensured that roads across Michigan were being fixed the right way with the right mix and material, so families could get where they needed to go safely. His legacy also includes establishing significant programs to provide opportunities for minorities and the disadvantaged, including his work to establish MDOT's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Transportation Diversity Recruitment Program (TDRP) in 2013, with approximately 300 students participating to date. He was also among the first CEOs of a state DOT to sign the national Equity in Infrastructure pledge.

Director Paul Ajegba is planning to retire from MDOT at the end of the year.

"I'm very pleased to have played a key role in helping the governor deliver on her signature promise to rebuild our state's vital transportation infrastructure," said **MDOT Director Paul Ajegba**. "My team has achieved unprecedented success in rebuilding roads and bridges the past four years. I am eager to see what else they accomplish."

"Brad Wieferich will do a great job leading MDOT through future challenges as we work together to make Michigan's transportation work the best in the nation," said **Rob Coppersmith, Executive Vice President of the Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association**. "His proven leadership on the Rebuilding Michigan Program, in engineering, and in a variety of transportation posts will help him build on MDOT's great work. We also must say 'thank you' to Paul Ajegba for his service. Under his tenure, we fixed the damn roads – 16,000 lane miles of them – as well as 1,200 bridges all while supporting 89,000 jobs for Michiganders. That work had made a real difference for our state, and we could not be more grateful."

Kathy Angerer, Acting Director of MDARD

Kathy Angerer was selected as acting director to lead MDARD where she is currently the deputy director. Angerer has served the people of the state of Michigan and southeast Michigan in several roles throughout her career. She was a State Representative from 2005-2010 in the area covering portions of Downriver; Executive Director of Government Affairs at AT&T Michigan from 2011-2012; and most recently, served as the City Manager for Hamtramck. Additionally, she has served as Hamtramck's Director of Community & Economic Development as well as their Community and Governmental Affairs Director. She attended Monroe County Community College and is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University.

A proud Yooper, Gary McDowell has led MDARD for all four years of the Whitmer Administration. During his tenure as director of MDARD, Gary McDowell has been a pivotal component to grow and expand the state's food and agriculture economy. From helping to bring a \$470 million state-of-the-art cheese and whey plant in St. Johns bringing 260 new jobs to helping secure \$25 million for water quality efforts in the Western Lake Erie Basin and navigating the state through multiple animal and plant health disease emergencies.

Director Gary McDowell is planning to retire at the end of the year.

"It has truly been my honor and privilege to serve as MDARD Director," said **MDARD Director Gary McDowell**. "As a lifelong public servant, leading this agency is a capstone moment in my career working alongside some of the most dedicated staff I've ever worked with. I'm impressed daily with their

knowledge, professionalism, and commitment. It gives me confidence that whatever comes, they will rise to the challenge. It has been a pleasure to serve Michiganders for the past four years. MDARD's work and mission is foundational to every person who lives, works, invests, and plays in Michigan. Our food and agriculture industry are an economic powerhouse, and I can't wait to see what success the future holds."

"Michigan's rural communities and agriculture sector are crucial for the success of our state, and we appreciate the hard work happening every day at the department to grow the rural economy," said **Chuck Lippstreu, president of the Michigan Agri-Business Association**. "We also appreciate Governor Whitmer's efforts to grow agriculture and invest in the future of our small towns. The department has been, and will continue to be, led by people who have our best interest at heart and can deliver results for rural Michigan."

Shannon Lott, Acting Director of DNR

Shannon Lott will serve as acting director at DNR, where she has worked for over 25 years, most recently as natural resources deputy. Before that, Lott served as assistant chief of the Forest Resources Division and held a variety of jobs in the department's Wildlife Division. Lott has worked with a broad range of conservation groups and legislators, as well as the Michigan Natural Resource Commission, to guide policies and programs related to outdoor recreation and natural resource management in the state. She has led DNR teams on critical issues such as renewable energy, climate change mitigation and the use of mass timber in construction. Lott co-leads for the state a unique forest bioeconomy partnership with the country of Finland. Lott has a B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Grand Valley State University and a M.S. in Forestry from Michigan State University. In her spare time, she enjoys hunting, fishing, camping and traveling with her family.

In the last four years, the DNR has made a transformational investment in public lands and sustainable natural resource management to support Michigan's outdoor recreation economy. This includes \$450 million in funding to address a backlog of infrastructure needs in state and local parks, another \$30 million to rebuild state fish hatcheries, a first-in-the-nation effort to leverage carbon storage capacity on state forest land and innovate programs to site solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations at DNR facilities around the state.

Executive Office Staff

In addition to selecting new leadership at state departments, Governor Whitmer announced staff changes on her executive team. Senior Advisor Shaquila Myers will be chief of staff to Speaker-elect Joe Tate. Deputy Chief of Staff Melanie Brown has taken a position as executive ombudsman and senior partnerships advisor at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Chief Legal Counsel Nick Bagley is returning to his position as a law professor at the University of Michigan. Maria Martinez will assume the role of acting chief legal counsel, while maintaining her duties as chief compliance officer.

"Shaquila, Mel, and Nick are some of the finest public servants I have worked with," said **Governor Whitmer**. "I am so grateful for their work over the last few years, and I know they will be missed. I wish them all the best of luck and I know that they will all continue to move our state forward."

Shaquila Myers

Shaquila Myers will lead Speaker-elect Joe Tate's office as chief of staff. While in the executive office, she served as senior advisor to the governor and chief of staff to Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist. Shaquila played a pivotal role in the passage of the bipartisan economic development package last year that helped Michigan land a \$7 billion investment from GM, creating 4,000 jobs. She has also spearheaded criminal justice reform efforts, the Jail and Pre-Trial Taskforce, and the Thriving Cities Tour, among other projects. Previously, Shaquila was legislative director for Senate Democratic Leader Jim Ananich and a policy analyst for the Michigan Senate. She received a Master of Public Administration and her undergraduate degree from Oakland University.

Melanie Brown

Melanie Brown will join the MEDC in a new role as executive ombudsman and senior partnerships advisor. In this role, she will lead the administration's efforts to help Michigan business succeed, grow and employ a strong Michigan workforce as the primary liaison between state government and the business and employer community. Melanie currently serves as deputy chief of staff for Governor Whitmer, managing the appointments, community affairs, and constituent services divisions within the executive office. She previously served as director of community affairs for the executive office and has held multiple senior roles across the Granholm and Snyder administrations.

Nick Bagley

Nick Bagley, currently chief legal counsel to the governor, will be rejoining the University of Michigan as a law professor with a specialty in health care and administrative law. During his time in the executive office, Nick helped craft Governor Whitmer's approach to combating the COVID-19 pandemic, charted the legal strategy to preserve reproductive freedom following the fall of *Roe v. Wade*, and oversaw the selection process for Kyra Harris Bolden, who will become Michigan's first Black woman on the state Supreme Court. Nick received his J.D. from New York University and his undergraduate degree from Yale.

Maria Martinez

Maria Martinez will lead the governor's legal team as acting chief legal counsel in addition to her current role as chief compliance officer. She previously served as deputy legal counsel. Maria joined the executive office in December 2020 and brings experience as a former in-house counsel for a Michigan business and working as an attorney at Bodman PLC, a Detroit-based law firm. Maria received both her J.D. and undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan.

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