

Mayor Johnston Announces Public Health & Environment Nomination

Published on May 23, 2024

Johnston's Final Nomination, for Denver Department of Public Health & Environment Leader, Completes Mayoral Appointments

DENVER, CO — Mike Johnston today announced the nomination of Karin McGowan as Executive Director of Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE), pending City Council approval. McGowan's appointment fills the last remaining open cabinet position in Mayor Johnston's Administration.

"I'm proud to nominate Karin McGowan to lead the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment," **said Mayor Mike Johnston**. "Throughout her career, Karin has stewarded equitable public health and environmental outcomes across Colorado and knows how to deliver strong and healthy communities. We conducted a thorough and meticulous search for this position because we knew we wanted a candidate with world-class talent, and we found exactly what we were looking for with Karin."



Karin McGowan is a long-time public health leader in Colorado, bringing years of experience managing public health and environmental crises and delivering world-class results for healthy communities. Prior to joining the Johnston Administration, McGowan served as an appointed member of the Energy and Carbon Management Conservation Commission, appointed by Governor Jared Polis as a member with substantial experience in public health. Prior to joining the commission, she spent over a decade at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) in various positions, including most recently as the Deputy Executive Director.

Throughout her tenure at CDPHE, she led the department's communications, legislative affairs, the Office of Health Equity, the Office of Emergency Planning and Response, and the Office of Planning and Partnership, tackling issues including the legalization of marijuana, the 2015 Gold King Mine spill, and COVID-19 response.

McGowan's experience includes her work at the Denver Regional Council of Governments as the director of policy development and communications. She also served as assistant director for external affairs for Great Outdoors Colorado and in Governor Roy Romer's administration.

McGowan earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Masters of Public Affairs from Indiana University-Bloomington. She will officially begin her role in mid-June.

McGowan's nomination marks the final appointee to fill Mayor Johnston's initial cabinet, rounding out his decisions for top agency leaders under his administration. Delivering on his promise to appoint a diverse cabinet of city leaders that represent the breadth of the Denver community, Mayor Johnston has hired a group of appointees that are majority people of color, who collectively bring a wide variety of viewpoints and experiences to move forward the city's mission of creating a safe, vibrant, and affordable Denver.