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Mass. Environmental Police head suspended without pay



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Vehicles for the Massachusetts Environmental Police parked at the office on Milk Street in Westborough.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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The head of the Massachusetts Environmental Police was suspended without pay Thursday amid an internal review into alleged misconduct, including whether he fixed citations for friends, according to a person with direct knowledge of the probe.

Colonel James McGinn, who previously served as Governor Charlie Baker's personal campaign driver, has led the 83-member police force since Baker appointed him to the position in 2014.

Peter Lorenz, spokesman for the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, said McGinn was suspended pending "an internal review of operational issues," but declined to provide more details.

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In an e-mail statement, Baker spokesman Brendan Moss said the governor “is committed to stopping waste, fraud and abuse across state government,” and supports McGinn’s suspension.

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A person with direct knowledge of the internal review said it involves allegations McGinn made citations for friends disappear.

McGinn, a former State Police sergeant, could not be reached for comment Thursday evening. He earned about \$133,000 in salary last year.

The agency’s second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Abdal-Kabir, will run the police force while McGinn is sidelined, officials said.

With an \$11 million annual budget, the Environmental Police enforce fishing, hunting, boating, and recreational vehicle laws. The agency has been mired in controversy during McGinn’s tenure.

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McGinn’s 2015 overhaul of his management team generated backlash and appeared to violate internal policies, including the hiring of his law school classmate, Brian Perrin, as his deputy, according to [The Lowell Sun](#).

In 2016, WCVB-TV reported that some officers spent parts of the day working from home.

In late August, the Globe [reported](#) that officers continued to work overtime assignments and off-duty details in the middle of the workday, scheduling their normal state work around more profitable side

gigs.

Agency officials had vowed to curb the practice in 2016, but let the practice continue.

Baker voiced his support for the agency in August, [defending](#) the controversial pay practice and noting that the matter paled in comparison to the alleged overtime theft by dozens of State Police troopers.

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Baker said Environmental Police leaders had “done a lot of things over course of the past couple of years to clean up their act on that stuff,” while adding, “there’s always more to be done.”

Baker also called for Environmental Police officials to turn on GPS tracking technology in cruisers to strengthen accountability.

Environmental Police had removed GPS tracking capabilities from their patrol vehicles three years ago at the union’s request. Just this spring, State Police activated the technology in their marked cruisers as part of a series of reforms.

Officials said the Environmental Police will reactivate the GPS technology in coming weeks.

McGinn’s suspension was handed down by Matthew Beaton, the head of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, which oversees Environmental Police. That agency has also weathered controversies in recent years.

The Globe [reported](#) last summer that Beaton used taxpayer funds to pay for a plane ticket during a Florida vacation. He was shuttled between the State House and Boston’s airport in an unmarked, fully equipped Environmental Police vehicle.

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