



## A history of scandals at Massachusetts' environmental agencies



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF/FILE 2018

### **Vehicles for the Massachusetts Environmental Police.**

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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The scandal that led to the ouster of the top Environmental Police official is just the latest controversy to engulf the state's branch of environmental agencies.

From patronage hiring to questionable payroll practices, controversies ricocheted in recent years from the police force to the parks department and all the way up to the cabinet-level Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, or EEA.

The environmental agency scandals under Governor Charlie Baker have led to suspensions, firings, and several pledges of reform. On Friday, the EEA announced the termination of Environmental Police

Colonel James McGinn and said it had referred details of his alleged ticket-fixing to the State Ethics Commission.

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Here's a timeline of key developments:

### Fall 2014

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- Governor Charlie Baker's pick to lead the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Shrewsbury Republican Matthew Beaton, [faces questions](#) about whether he is qualified to run a sprawling state agency. Beaton, a 36-year-old state representative in his second term, had never overseen a significant government body and cited building his own home as among his bona fides.

### Fall 2016

- Two Department of Conservation and Recreation leaders are [suspended](#) for using golf carts assigned to the Fourth of July events on the Esplanade to ferry a handful of GOP partygoers. One of those officials, a top Baker 2014 campaign field organizer and a GOP state committeeman, was later [forced out](#) after revelations he used blue lights on his state vehicle to get through rush-hour traffic in Boston.
- Baker [forces](#) Beaton's chief operating officer to [step down](#). A probe ordered by the governor concluded that the COO's cousin, a DCR personnel officer, attempted to coerce a co-worker to persuade her fiance, a Democrat, not to run against an incumbent Republican state senator. The personnel officer also lost his job.
- A [series](#) of news [reports](#), including a probe by [WCVB](#), expose questionable, costly pay practices at the 83-officer Environmental Police agency. The revelations prompted a review by the executive environmental office, which also announced policy changes.

## Early 2017

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- A DCR official [resigns](#) after pornography was found on his state-issued computer.

## Mid-2017

- Globe [reports](#) detail [how](#) the state's environmental agencies are [rife with employees who have political and family ties](#), despite Baker's campaign [vow](#) to ban patronage hires. The state's Democratic Party [called](#) for an investigation, and at least one employee [abruptly left](#) months later.

## Late summer 2017

- The Globe [reports](#) that Beaton used taxpayer funds to pay for a round-trip plane ticket during a vacation to Florida and was driven back and forth between the State House and Boston's Logan International Airport. A top officer, Brian Perrin, drove the unmarked, fully equipped Environmental Police vehicle. Beaton quietly paid back the money only after the incident was found by an internal audit months later.

## Fall 2017

- The Lowell Sun [reports](#) that moves made by Environmental Police Colonel James McGinn to shake up the police agency's management appeared to violate internal policies, including hiring Perrin, an old law-school classmate, to work as his top deputy.

## Summer 2018

- Perrin [steps down](#), drawing more scrutiny because he worked for the Environmental Police just long enough to boost his pension, WCVB reported.

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- A DCR employee is [placed on unpaid leave](#) after a grand jury indicted her on charges of stealing money from a client at her now-closed law firm.
- The Globe [reports](#) how questionable pay practices at the Environmental Police have continued despite the promises officials made in the fall of 2016 to crack down.

## Fall 2018

- McGinn is [suspended without pay](#) amid an internal review into alleged misconduct, including whether he [fixed traffic citations](#) for friends. At least two other high-ranking officers at the agency were [involved](#)



in a behind-the-scenes effort to help make the citations disappear, according to records obtained by the Globe.

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