



Bruins 3, Penguins 4, Final

Fired Environmental Police colonel claims he was ousted for reporting misconduct

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) Globe Staff, April 30, 2019, 8:31 p.m.



Vehicles for the Massachusetts Environmental Police parked at the office on Milk Street in Westborough. PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF/FILE 2018/GLOBE STAFF

The former head of the Massachusetts Environmental Police, who was fired last fall for allegedly fixing two traffic tickets, claims he was ousted in retaliation for reporting misconduct in the agency and was made a scapegoat during the gubernatorial campaign.

Former colonel James McGinn asserts he repeatedly flagged unethical and illegal conduct under his watch, but his complaints went unheeded by his superior, outgoing state Environmental Secretary Matthew Beaton, according to letters released Tuesday by McGinn's attorney.

The letters, sent earlier this year and this week to Beaton's office, outlined McGinn's grievances and his plan to file a whistle-blower lawsuit against the state.

"He incurred the wrath of a large number of people in managerial positions, who, we contend, waited for the opportunity to embarrass him," said McGinn's attorney, Timothy M. Burke.

Spokesmen for Governor Charlie Baker's administration as well as the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs declined to comment Tuesday evening.

Beaton, who on Monday [announced](#) plans to step down for a job in the private sector, could not be reached for comment.

In October, Beaton [fired](#) McGinn, a former State Police sergeant who years ago served as Baker's personal campaign driver. An internal state review had found he [fixed two tickets](#), installed unauthorized surveillance cameras, and hired a private investigator to follow an officer.

The report was [forwarded](#) to the state ethics commission, which declined to comment Tuesday, saying it was barred from doing so by state law. The attorney general's office said it reviewed the report and did not take any criminal action.

McGinn's firing followed a Globe report in which his former neighbor said he had called McGinn in 2015 to contest a ticket. That citation never made its way into the court system, records show.

Following McGinn's termination, his attorney called the firing politically motivated and suggested broader trouble within the agency. The former colonel himself fired back in a letter initially sent in January to the administration, and shared with the Globe Tuesday.

The letter calls the allegation that McGinn fixed tickets “nothing short of ludicrous,” and includes a laundry list of complaints.

McGinn claimed he repeatedly told Beaton that “there was a complete lack of accountability” for many senior staffers, and some were “not working their full shift or not showing up for work at all.”

The letter says McGinn sought to install security cameras at an Environmental Police office in Westborough to monitor officers who were skipping shifts.

“He was never instructed not to do so and advised to keep a ‘lid on things’ and that no one wanted to hear of any problems before the most recent gubernatorial election,” the letter states.

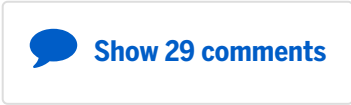
McGinn also alleged Beaton, as well as the personal driver for Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, had inquired with him about what to do with tickets they had received from State Police. He also claimed an executive environmental staffer asked him about a Boston parking ticket.

In each case, McGinn said, he merely explained their options to appeal.

In a phone interview, Burke said each of his client’s allegations “can be documented either by e-mail or corroboration from other witnesses.” Burke declined to provide additional information, citing a forthcoming lawsuit.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and its subagencies have weathered a series of [controversies](#) in recent years, including [claims](#) of questionable pay practices at the Environmental Police, as well as Department of Conservation and Recreation leaders [using state-owned golf carts](#) to ferry a handful of GOP partygoers during Fourth of July festivities.

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