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Garland G. Erbele appointed as North Dakota's 18th State Engineer

The North Dakota State Water Commission today voted unanimously to appoint Garland G. Erbele North Dakota's 18th State Engineer. Erbele, an environmental engineer with nearly 40 years of experience in water management, will begin his duties in May. The State Engineer serves as Chief Engineer and Secretary to the State Water Commission and is responsible for regulating the allocation of the state's waters, dam safety, sovereign land management, and drainage.

"Garland Erbele's proven leadership and technical expertise involving the management of major water resources will be a tremendous asset to the State Water Commission and to the state as a whole," said Gov. Jack Dalrymple, chairman of the nine-member Water Commission. "The Commission was determined to find someone who has the right experience and the strong skill sets needed to build on the great progress we've made in managing North Dakota's diverse water resources, and we're confident that we found that in Garland Erbele."

Erbele worked for 35 years at the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Between 2000 and 2013, he served as the agency's chief engineer for the Water Rights Program. In that role, Erbele served as the advisor to the State Water Management Board and was responsible for the administration of state water law, including the management of state water rights. He also served as the agency's lead technical negotiator on water rights issues. Additionally, Erbele has served as the South Dakota representative on the Western States Water Council and as South Dakota's representative to the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes. Prior to becoming a chief engineer, Erbele served as a DENR natural resource engineer for 21 years. His experience includes the development of state water standards and regulations, project planning and development, environmental permitting and compliance and managing working relationships with private enterprises, municipalities, local governments as well as state and federal agencies.

Since 2013, Erbele has served as a senior water resources engineer for Wenck Associates, Inc., an engineering and environmental consultant company. Erbele established the company's South Dakota office and assisted in the operation and development of several public and private water projects in South Dakota. He earned his undergraduate degree and a Master of Science Degree in Environmental Engineering at North Dakota State University.

Erbele will become North Dakota's 18th State Engineer when Todd Sando retires in July. Sando began his career with the State Water Commission in 1985 as a water resource engineer. He was appointed State Engineer in July 2010.

Dalrymple thanked Sando for more than 30 years of service to the State Water Commission. Sando has played a key role in North Dakota's flood response, recovery and prevention efforts, floodplain regulation, and he has directed the development of critical flood control and water supply projects throughout the state. Additionally, Sando has worked extensively to advance management practices involving interstate and international water resources.

The State Water Commission began a national search to replace Sando in early March. The Commission received 13 applications by the April 8 deadline and completed its candidate interviews on April 19th. The Water Commission noted that they were pleased with the caliber of the applicants and are thankful for their interest in the position.