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## **The Massachusetts Gaming Commission appoints Karen Wells as New Executive Director**

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) today selected **Karen Wells** as its new Executive Director. The MGC's five commissioners voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Ms. Wells, who has been with the MGC since 2013, serving as Director of the Investigations and Enforcement Bureau (IEB). During her tenure with the MGC she has also served twice as Interim Executive Director, most recently leading the MGC staff through the COVID-19 pandemic, working to support an orderly temporary suspension of gaming in the Commonwealth—and subsequently a safe re-opening of casinos in July 2020.

In her role as Director of the IEB, Ms. Wells work focused on protecting the public interest and ensuring the integrity of legal gaming in Massachusetts by leading the regulatory enforcement of the Expanded Gaming Act. On behalf of the MGC, she was also responsible for facilitating law enforcement activity involving the Massachusetts State Police, the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and other local, state and federal law enforcement partners.

“On behalf of my fellow commissioners, it is my great pleasure to congratulate Karen on her appointment as Executive Director,” said **Chair Cathy Judd-Stein**. “In addition to her track record of accomplishment as IEB Director during the past seven years, Karen has served skillfully over the last eight months as Interim Executive Director under circumstances we could hardly fathom at the beginning of this year. She has demonstrated not only her subject matter expertise, but her strong management skills as she has helped the MGC adjust to operating remotely while maintaining productivity on behalf of the Commonwealth.”

At the request of Chair Judd-Stein, Commissioner Enrique Zuniga lead the hiring process, which included a review of Wells accomplishments as Interim Executive Director, a staff survey and culminated in an interview during today's public meeting. “Last winter when we began this process with the intention to hire an executive search firm, we had no doubt that Karen would emerge as a leading candidate in a national search,” said **Commissioner Zuniga**. After having the opportunity to evaluate Karen's job performance as Interim Executive Director over these many challenging months, it became clear that she was the ideal candidate for this position and the MGC and the Commonwealth would be well served by her in the role of Executive Director. I am delighted that Karen has accepted this position.”



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Prior to joining the MGC, Ms. Wells most recently served as the Undersecretary for Law Enforcement at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety. As Undersecretary, Ms. Wells directed the functions and administration of the Massachusetts State Police, the Department of Public Safety and the Municipal Police Training Committee. During her tenure as Undersecretary, she also served as secretariat lead for gaming-related issues. In 2008, Ms. Wells functioned as the commonwealth's Senior Counsel for Law Enforcement and Fire Services and was responsible for managing policy development and implementation of programs relative to crime prevention, emergency management and public safety.

In 2007, Ms. Wells served as Deputy Chief of the Public Protection, Anti-Terrorism, Corruption and Technology Unit at the Middlesex District Attorney's Office where she prosecuted high-level narcotics and white-collar crimes. Previously, she served as Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Bureau of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office assigned to the Special Investigations and Narcotics Division.

In 1994, Ms. Wells began her career as an Assistant District Attorney at the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office. Wells graduated with a law degree from Boston University School of Law in 1994. In 1991, she graduated from Colgate University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English. Wells is also the recipient of several commendations and distinguished service awards including the Massachusetts State Police Superintendent's Commendation for her contribution to a wiretap investigation of a major state narcotics investigation.

### **About MGC's Executive Director**

The Executive Director is the executive and administrative head of the Commission and is responsible for administering and enforcing the provisions of law relative to the Commission and to each administrative unit thereof. The Executive Director assumes leadership of the Commission staff and is responsible for staffing, establishing, maintaining, and changing administrative units as may be appropriate, subject to the approval of the Commission. The Executive Director plans, directs, executes, and coordinates all administrative activities and assists the Commission in developing the policies and procedures related to the regulation of gaming in Massachusetts.



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