

Christie taps two for Pinelands Commission

D'Arcy Rohan Green and Robert Jackson were among seven commissioners who voted in January to reject a South Jersey Gas proposal to allow a natural gas pipeline to cross through about 10 miles of protected Pinelands.

By **DAVID LEVINSKY**
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TRENTON — Gov. Chris Christie has nominated New Hanover Mayor Dennis Roohr to serve on the Pinelands Commission as one of two replacements for members who voted earlier this

year to not allow a natural gas pipeline through a protected portion of the million-acre reserve.

Christie nominated Roohr and Ocean City resident Robert Barr to replace D'Arcy Rohan Green, of Bay Head, and Robert Jackson, of Middle Township.

Both Green's and Jackson's terms have expired, but they have continued to serve as holdovers pending action by the governor to renominate or replace them on the 15-member commission.

Green and Jackson were among seven commissioners who voted in January to reject a South Jersey Gas proposal to allow a natural gas pipeline to cross through about 10 miles of

See **PINELANDS**, Page A2

Pinelands

Continued from Page A1

protected Pinelands to the old coal-fired BL England plant in Cape May County's Upper Township.

The commission wound up splitting the vote 7-7, with one recusal. At least eight affirmative votes were required to approve the pipeline, which had been supported by the Christie administration as necessary for maintaining the state's reliable energy supply.

Christie's nominations immediately were criticized by New Jersey Sierra Club Director Jeff Tittel, who described them as the beginning of a "purge"

to replace members who voted against the pipeline in anticipation that the project could return to the commission.

"He's going to replace them with rubber stamps," Tittel said. "This is the beginning of what is potentially opening up the Pinelands to the political whims of a governor with an anti-environment agenda that punishes commissioners for doing the right thing."

Christie is charged with appointing seven of the commissioners. The others are appointed by the seven counties that are part of the Pinelands. One representative is named by the secretary of the U.S. Department

Last month, the

Cumberland County Board of Freeholders voted to replace Leslie Ficcaglia on the commission with Jane Jannarone. Ficcaglia also voted against the pipeline.

Christie's nominations must be confirmed by the full Senate before they can be seated. Because Roohr hails from Burlington County, his nomination can be blocked by either of its two state senators: Diane Allen, R-7th of Edgewater Park, or Dawn Marie Addiego, R-8th of Evesham.

Roohr, a farmer, has spent 13 years serving on the New Hanover Township Committee. He was unable to be reached for comment Monday on his nomination.

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