Mary Nichols. Source:
California Air Resources
Board

Jerry Brown has hit the ground running not only in terms of budget work but in putting together his environmental policy team. Today he announced the re-appointment of Mary Nichols as Chair of the California Air Resources Board and the appointment of John Laird as Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency.

Nichols' reappointment is an excellent move that won't surprise anyone. She first served as ARB Chair during Brown's second term from 1979 to 1983. And she's been at the helm again since 2007, guiding the Board as it works to implement AB 32, the landmark greenhouse gas emission reduction law. She won't lose a beat continuing that work.

John Laird. Source:
John Laird for Senate

Laird is a former member of the California Assembly and Mayor of Santa Cruz. In his unsuccessful bid for election to the California Senate last year, he emphasized his opposition to offshore drilling, support for renewable energy, and commitment to coastal protection. He has a record of environmental advocacy. According to the San Jose Mercury News:

> As a Democratic assemblyman in a district stretching from Morgan Hill to Big Sur, he co-authored California's landmark climate bill, AB 32; promoted water conservation; expanded the development of renewable energy and sustainable building standards; protected oil spill response funding; and established the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, a state agency designed to protect the mountain region.
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> He earned a score of 100 percent from the California League of Conservation Voters, which called him "hands-down one of the best legislators California has had this decade."

Laird, a former chair of the Assembly Budget Committee, is also well-positioned to

navigate California’s challenging budget situation. Environmental groups have applauded his appointment, while the state Republican Party has been sharply critical.