

NC Chamber

EIGHTY-SECOND

Annual Meeting & Awards

MARCH 5, 2024 | RALEIGH, NC

Mitch Gillespie

Mitch Gillespie is a former Assistant Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), now called the Department of Environmental Quality. Gillespie also served as a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, member of the Environmental Management Commission, and senior policy advisor for the North Carolina Speaker of the House.



Gillespie represented the eighty-fifth district and what was previously the forty-ninth district in the North Carolina House of Representatives, which included constituents from Avery, Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, and Yancey counties.

A small business owner from Marion, North Carolina, Gillespie was first elected to the state House in 1998 and served seven terms. Gillespie was re-elected to an eighth term but resigned to take a position in the executive branch in January of 2013. While a state legislator, Gillespie was a proponent of regulatory reform, particularly with regards to DENR. He famously drew a bullseye on his window that, when he sat at his desk, aligned with DENR's headquarters at the opposite end of the state government complex. The bullseye served as a representation and reminder to Gillespie of where his attention was focused.

Gillespie co-chaired North Carolina's Environmental Review Commission, which set the Legislature's environmental agenda. Additionally, he served as an Appropriations Committee Chair and member of the Education, Environment, Rules, and Transportation committees.

During his tenure, Gillespie successfully implemented over 70 pieces of regulatory reform and worked with over 100 stakeholders to draft a new state energy policy. He also authored legislation that led to the creation of the State Mining and Energy Commission, which was charged with developing regulations to address fracking while protecting water quality.

His background is in surveying, civil engineering, and land development.