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Date: April 11, 2025

To: Government Oversight Committee

From: 
Peter Schleck, Director

Re: Proposed Provisional Scoping and Order of Priority Submitted for Committee
Votes: Three GOC-Assigned OPEGA Reviews; Further Discussion on Two
Other Potential Reviews to Follow

The following provisional scopes of work are respectfully submitted for the consideration and approval of the Government Oversight Committee at today's meeting. These concern the following three reviews the Committee has recently voted to add to the OPEGA Work Plan:

1. Conflict of Interest Concerns over Contracting Activity in the Office of Cannabis Policy

“Since its inception, how have standards and requirements been applied in the Office of Cannabis Policy to identify, disclose, manage, or mitigate potential or actual conflicts of interest in contracting activity?”

2. Timeliness of Payments by DHHS for Foster Children in Day Care

- A. “By what standards and requirements, if any, is the timeliness of DHHS payments for foster children in day care measured and managed; and
- B. How has DHHS performed relative to any standards and requirements (or in their absence, as the case may be), and as indicated by sampling and testing methodology(ies) for performance timeframes chosen by OPEGA.”

3. Questions about the Operation of the Juniper Ridge Landfill.

- A. “How do appropriate elements of Maine government oversee Juniper Ridge as a state-owned, contractor-operated landfill with respect to standards and requirements for:
- a. Contracting activity (including any authorized exceptions);
 - b. Site Expansion or Consideration of Alternative Sites; and
 - c. Environmental considerations, focused on best practices in solid waste disposal.
- B. How do appropriate elements of Maine government measure and seek to ensure that Juniper Ridge otherwise operates in the “best interest” of the state, to the extent that term or similarly analogous term(s) may be found or implied in such standards and requirements and which have been interpreted to have certain accepted meaning(s).”

For purposes of these three scopes of work, “standards and requirements” includes governing statutes, regulations, rules, or goals.

OPEGA further recommends that the Committee vote to direct that OPEGA prioritize these reviews in the order they are listed above, with the understanding that multiple reviews or differing combinations of reviews may be ongoing at any given time. If approved, OPEGA would return to the Committee for additional approval if further information or review suggests any refinement in scope of work is warranted.

OPEGA also looks forward to further discussion and direction from the Committee, at a time of the Committee’s choosing, about whether additional work is desired concerning staffing and staff safety at Riverview and Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Centers, and whether the Committee will assign OPEGA a review of the Home Energy Assistance Program. In either or both of these events, OPEGA would propose that such work be scheduled at such time as OPEGA determines it will not impair full and appropriate attention to the work on Cannabis Conflict Concerns, Day Care Payments, and the Juniper Ridge Landfill.

I welcome your questions, and thank you, kindly, for your consideration.