

**Testimony of Scott A. Young, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Defense,
Veterans and Emergency Management**

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

**"An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the
Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and To
Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of
State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023"**

March 7, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Breen, Representative Pierce and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, also Senator Hickman, Representative Caiazzo and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. I am Scott Young, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management. I am here today to testify in support of the supplemental budget bill, LD 1995.

The Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management coordinates and administers the discharge of Maine State Government's responsibility for all military, veteran and emergency management activities through the authorization, planning, provision of resources, administration, operation, and audit of each. In addition to their Federal mission, our Soldiers and Airmen are immediately available to respond to the Governor and citizens of Maine in times of crisis. The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services provides numerous support services to Maine's 115,000 veterans and manages the 4 Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries across the State. Although not included in my testimony today, the Maine Emergency Management Agency is charged with all disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and Homeland Security operations within the State of Maine.

I will address the new budget initiatives in the order listed in the Public Hearing Testimony agenda. The Department of Defense, Veterans, and Emergency Management (DVEM) initiatives begin on page A-41.

MILITARY TRAINING & OPERATIONS 0108 (Page 41)

There are 8 initiatives for the Military Training and Operations program, 6 of which are reorganizations or reclassifications and 2 are for the All Other line category.

On page A-41, there are 6 new initiatives for the Military Training and Operations program 0108.

First initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of one Building Maintenance Superintendent position to a Superintendent of Buildings position.

General Fund increases by \$409 in FY22 and \$2,747 in FY23 while the Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$1,226 in FY22 and \$8,242 in FY23.

This position is critical to the Maine Air National Guard in that this position manages the installation property management program and assists with and determines the annual financial plan for staff, material and equipment needs for successful operation of our building maintenance program. The position is the primary point of contact for the development and implementation of the installation operational plans for property management and building maintenance which ensure established objectives are validated and met. Finally, this position assists the Facility Manager with conducting building assessments and inspections.

The second initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of one Carpenter position to a Building Maintenance Coordinator position.

General Fund increases by \$274 in FY22 and \$1,093 in FY23 while the Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$821 in FY22 and \$3,283 in FY23.

This position provides yearly preventative maintenance activities, monitoring and inspection of contractor work, adjusts the frequency of inspections, is on call 24/7 and is authorized to make adjustments for the repair and maintenance of facilities to include subcontracting. They provide input to the yearly preventative maintenance program and is the Subject Matter Expert for all structural, masonry and carpentry issues. Additionally, this position assists the Building Maintenance Superintendent and the Facility Manager with conducting building assessments and inspections.

The third initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of one Civil Engineer II position to a Civil Engineer III position.

Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$1,677 in FY22 and \$10,645 in FY23.

This position is required to provide the senior breadth and depth of facilities project management of a Civil Engineer III classification. It also requires a Supervisory job classification to supervise 3 Facility Project Managers and 1 Engineering Technician IV position.

The fourth initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of one Custodial Worker III position to an Executive Housekeeper position.

General Fund increases by \$188 in FY22 and \$1,249 in FY23 while the Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$564 in FY22 and \$3,751 in FY23.

The primary purpose of this position will be to perform maintenance and personnel services work of a supervisory nature in monitoring, coordinating, and overseeing day-to-day operations and staff engaged in a variety of custodial activities within multiple facilities. Responsibilities will entail planning, assigning, supervising, and inspecting staff work; overseeing ordering and delivery of products; testing and evaluating new equipment and products to maximize unit efficiency and cost effectiveness; and maintaining inventories of supplies and equipment.

The fifth initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of 3 Custodial Worker II positions to 3 Building Custodian positions.

General Fund increases by \$637 in FY22 and \$2,547 in FY23 while the Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$1,908 in FY22 and \$7,627 in FY23.

The primary purpose of these positions will be to perform maintenance and personal service work involving the custodial care and maintenance of public buildings. Responsibilities will include cleaning floors and carpets; dusting and polishing furniture; washing windows, woodwork, toilets, washrooms, and fixtures; changing light bulbs; performing trash and recycling removal services; and operating and maintaining various types of custodial equipment.

The final initiative on this page provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of one Office Specialist I to a Contract/Grant Specialist position.

General Fund increases by \$322 in FY22 and \$1,939 in FY23 while the Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$965 in FY22 and \$5,810 in FY23.

The 101st Air Refueling Wing is authorized an office specialist position to support base operations. This initiative upgrades the Office Specialist I position to a Contract/Grant Specialist and is necessary to ensure all solicitations, bids, correspondence, contracts and funding tasks for goods, services, and construction related activities that are required of the Maine Air National Guard are accomplished in a timely and professional manner.

On page A-42, there are 2 new initiatives for the Military Training and Operations program 0108.

The first initiative provides funding for custodial service contracts at Armories and Readiness Centers across the State that currently do not have a custodian or custodial services contract. These facilities are currently being cleaned by Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) members. This hinders the Maine National Guard's ability to perform mission essential training of service members across the state. Funding request is to support 13 armories with approximately 195,000 square feet.

General Fund increases by \$20,000 in FY22 and \$81,000 in FY23 while the Federal Expenditures Fund increases by \$23,200 in FY22 and \$94,000 in FY23.

The second initiative provides funding to replace 2 vehicles leased through the Central Fleet Management Division. Presently the Bureau has two vehicles at or beyond their useful life. Central Fleet has notified the Director of Building Control Operations and informed him they no longer intend to support the vehicles in question. Central Fleet recovers the cost of purchase in the first 36 months of the lease. This funding covers the difference between the current lease cost and increased cost for leasing new replacement vehicles.

General Fund increases by \$0 in FY22 and \$15,108 in FY23.

VETERANS SERVICES 0110 (Page A-43)

I will now move on to the Veterans Services 0110 program on page A-43. There are 5 initiatives for the program, all of which are personnel or reorganization actions.

The first initiative provides funding to increase the hours of one part-time Office Associate II position from 40 hours to 80 hours. Public Law 2021, Chapter 429, added 2 new Veteran Service Officers to the Maine Bureau of Veterans Services with the intent of growing outreach and support to veterans. As a result, the bureau anticipates increased workload in the areas of financial recordkeeping, administrative functions, strategic partnership, and homeless veterans' services. Making this position full-time will help the bureau accommodate this increased workload. Having a full-time person in this position will also improve continuity of programs given our limited staff.

Legislative head count will increase by 0.5 and the General Fund increases by \$8,538 in FY22 and \$35,903 in FY23.

The second initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of 11 Veterans Services Officer positions from range 23 to range 25.

General Fund increases by \$31,386 in FY22 and \$135,717 in FY23.

The Agency has updated its minimum qualifications in response to Federal requirements. Review of the current classification, audit information, and historical analysis of the class file revealed that, although the nature of the work remains consistent with the existing classification; the breadth and depth of the work is changing directly related to implementation of the Appeals Modernization Act, Mission Act of 2018, use of multiple complex web-portal programs, and VA Pension program modifications. Responsibilities entail obtaining and retaining required certifications, supervising staff, overseeing day-to-day operations of field and itinerant offices, coordinating mental health and housing services, ensuring consistency and compliance with decentralized recognition programs, and leading and advocating for benefits before multiple VA entities.

The third initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of 3 Heavy Equipment Operator II positions to 3 Grounds & Equipment Supervisor positions.

General Fund increases by \$2,732 in FY22 and \$17,158 in FY23.

Administration and maintenance of the grounds at the 4 Maine Bureau of Veterans Services cemeteries has become increasingly complex and multi-faceted over the last decade. This position must now supervise and direct groundskeeping crews and private contractors at each of the cemeteries. This position must also adhere and manage operations in accordance with the State of Maine Veterans Cemetery Standard Operating Procedure which incorporates specific and detailed requirements of the US Dept of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration.

The fourth initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of 6 Groundskeeper II positions to 6 Heavy Equipment Operator II positions.

General Fund increases by \$8,038 in FY22 and \$34,368 in FY23.

Administration and maintenance of the grounds at the 4 Maine Bureau of Veterans Services cemeteries has become increasingly complex and multi-faceted over the last decade. This position and others like it perform the duties of the current position while also routinely engaging in the plot openings and closures, attendance at funerals,

upkeep of burial records and locations at the various cemeteries throughout the State. The duties of the position are more consistent with those of the Heavy Equipment Operator II.

The final initiative provides funding for the approved management-initiated reorganization of 2 Grounds & Equipment Supervisor positions to 2 Grounds & Equipment Maintenance Manager positions.

General Fund increases by \$2,021 in FY22 and \$11,563 in FY23.

Administration and maintenance of the grounds at the 4 Maine Bureau of Veterans Services cemeteries has become increasingly complex and multi-faceted over the last decade. In this management position, they must balance the supervision of a crew that provides upkeep, plot openings and closures, attendance at funerals, upkeep of burial records and locations along with a set of strong interpersonal skills that is necessary to successfully interact with funeral home directors, military honor guard details, private maintenance contractors and most importantly grieving families.

LANGUAGE INITIATIVES

In addition to Part A, our department has 1 initiative in the General Fund Final Language associated with the closure of the Maine Military Authority.

Part T, on pages 27 and 28, requests authority to carry forward from State Fiscal Year 22 to State Fiscal Year 23 any unexpended balance of the \$400,000 provided under Public Law 2021, Chapter 398.

This one-time funding was provided for environmental closure activity costs at the former Maine Military Authority site in Limestone. Two sequential contracts are required to first, conduct a full background investigation and sampling plan and second, use the results of the first contract to develop remedial actions plans and possibly conduct minor remedial activities. Our department has just awarded the first phase and will begin investigative activities soon. Given the environmental and weather conditions of Northern Maine, the investigation and sampling plan will not be complete until late Spring. As the second contract "Statement of Work" is reliant on the results of the investigation and sampling plan, there may not be enough time left in FY22 to compete and award the remedial action plan contract. Therefore, a portion of the \$400,000 provided under PL 2021, Chap 398 may be needed in FY23.

Thank you for your time today. This concludes my testimony and I stand by for your questions.