

TESTIMONY
OF
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Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

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“An Act Making Unified Allocations from the Highway Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025”

Good afternoon, Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Michael Sauschuck, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. I am here today to testify in support of LD 259.

Overall Budget

This budget advances the Governor’s guiding belief that to build a stronger, more prosperous state where opportunity is available to all, we must invest in the infrastructure that supports the people of Maine, our greatest asset.

That is why this budget proposal strengthens the very things that Maine people rely on every day to succeed, building on the strong success of the currently enacted budget and the last legislative session to tackle Maine’s greatest challenges.

We have governed cautiously and in a fiscally prudent way over the past four years, making sure that – even in the hardest of times during the pandemic – we lived within our means. This budget proposal continues that practice.

We look forward to the discussions over the next several months as we outline each initiative and impact of the proposed investments.

Departmental Overview

The Department of Public Safety was established to serve the people by providing, coordinating, and leading a responsive and comprehensive public safety system to protect their lives, rights, and properties. This broad mission is accomplished with 643 positions spread across 10 bureaus. The Bureaus are Administration, Capitol Police, Consolidated Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal's Office, Gambling Control, Highway Safety, Maine Criminal Justice Academy, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Maine State Police.

Administration – Public Safety

I will begin today on Page 10 with the Administration – Public Safety Program. This Program is the Commissioner's Office, and it oversees the activities and programs of the bureaus and offices, undertakes comprehensive planning, develops and implements procedures and practices to promote economy and coordination within the department and actively seeks cooperation between the department and all other law enforcement entities in the State. The office houses the public information office and coordinates with the Department of Administrative and Financial Services for information technology, financial, and human resource services.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$231 each in FY24 and FY25. MaineIT rate and insurance premium rate increases will be a common theme as I progress through the remainder of my testimony.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to the Department's share of the cost for the Financial and Human Resources Service Center within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. The cost of these services has increased by 25% compared to the \$1 million we are expected to pay in FY23. This request will increase the Highway Fund by \$163,507 in FY24 and FY25.

Highway Safety DPS

The next program, Highway Safety, begins on page 12. The Bureau of Highway Safety promotes behavioral driver safety programs and projects designed to make Maine's roads and highways safe. These programs consist of motor vehicle occupant restraint, child restraint, impaired driving, motorcycle safety, speed enforcement, and the Maine defensive driving program. The bureau also is responsible for the annual planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the Highway Safety Plan for Maine.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and adjusts the baseline budget in the Highway Fund by \$27,158 in FY24 and \$27,198 in FY25.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$77 in both FY24 and FY25.

Motor Vehicle Inspection

The next program, Motor Vehicle Inspection, is located on page 13. The Motor Vehicle Inspection program administers and enforces the motor vehicle inspection program including issuing stickers and authorizing garages to perform the inspections.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and adjusts the baseline budget in the Highway Fund by \$27,297 in FY24 and FY25.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$902 in both FY24 and FY25.

State Police

The Maine State Police Program begins on page 14. The Maine State Police provides full law enforcement services to areas that do not have organized police departments. Troopers respond to all manners of calls for service much like any other police department would. Troopers also patrol the rural roads, interstate system, and Maine Turnpike enforcing motor vehicle laws and responding to accidents. Maine State Police detectives investigate all homicides outside of Portland and Bangor as well as other major crimes. The Maine State Police operates a crime lab, computer crimes lab, and a commercial vehicle unit. They maintain the state's criminal history records and sex offender registry. They also provide many other specialized teams and law enforcement services to the State of Maine.

The first initiative provides funding for a higher anticipated cost of fuel for State Police vehicles. The request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$238,000 in FY24 and FY25.

The second initiative provides one-time funding to replace the exterior siding at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$14,284 in FY24 only.

The third initiative provides one-time funding to renovate the lobby and kitchen at the State Police Crime Lab. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$17,855 in FY24 only.

The fourth initiative provides one-time funding to replace office furniture at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$2,800 in FY24 only.

The fifth initiative provides one-time funding to replace the standard-issued taser equipment including holsters, cartridges, and spare batteries for 290 State Police positions. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$516,470 in FY24 only.

The sixth initiative provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$4,582 in both FY24 and FY25.

The seventh initiative establishes one DNA Forensic Analyst position funded by 65% General Fund and 35% Highway Fund to assist with case work for the State Police Crime Lab and provides funding for related All Other costs. This request increases the Highway Fund appropriation by one headcount, Personal Services of \$39,120 in FY24 and \$41,186 in FY25, and All Other of \$2,605 in FY24 and \$2,641 in FY25.

The eighth initiative provides one-time funding to add 13 required redundant air supply systems for the State Police Dive Team. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$4,257 in FY24 only.

The ninth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 13 dive computers for transmitters for the State Police Dive Team. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$6,472 in FY24 only.

The tenth initiative provides one-time funding to replace one trailer for the State Police Dive Team. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$3,325 in FY24 only.

The eleventh initiative provides one-time funding to add pyrolysis equipment for the gas chromatography mass spectrometry machine for the State Police Crime Lab. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$3,500 in FY24 only.

The twelfth initiative provides one-time funding to purchase two rifle light/laser switches for the State Police. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$2,428 in FY24 only.

The next initiative provides one-time funding to add two optics to the equipment inventory for the State Police Tactical Team. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$1,786 in FY24 only.

The fourteenth initiative provides one-time funding for specialized training for the State Police Tactical Team. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$7,142 in FY24 only.

The fifteenth initiative provides one-time funding for repairs to the current State Police Crisis Negotiation Team mobile unit. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$14,384 in FY24 only.

The sixteenth initiative provides one-time funding to add hydraulic breaching equipment for the State Police. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$5,950 in FY24 only.

The seventeenth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 6 dry suits for the State Police Dive Team. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$6,950 in FY24 only.

The eighteenth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 307 rifle upper receiver devices for the State Police. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$40,015 in FY24 only.

The nineteenth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 50 pistols for the State Police. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$8,928 in FY24 only.

The twentieth initiative provides one-time funding to purchase noise suppression equipment for the State Police. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$27,348 in FY24 only.

The next initiative provides one-time funding to replace the portable X-ray equipment for the State Police Bomb Team. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$24,500 in FY24 only.

The twenty-second initiative provides one-time funding to purchase a replacement bomb suit for the State Police Bomb Team. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$12,250 in FY24 only.

The twenty-third initiative provides funding for a marketing campaign to advertise the benefits of joining the State Police. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$7,140 in FY24 and FY25.

The twenty-fourth initiative provides funding for an anticipated 10% increase in the cost of firearms. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$357 in FY24 and FY25.

The twenty-fifth initiative begins on page A-24 and provides funding for an anticipated 30% increase in the cost of ammunition. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$12,499 in FY24 and FY25.

The twenty-sixth initiative provides funding for an anticipated 65% increase in uniform costs due to rising production and shipping costs. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$44,090 in FY24 and FY25.

The twenty-seventh initiative for the State Police account provides funding for increased debt service associated with the purchase of State Police vehicles on a regular vehicle replacement schedule. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$311,363 in FY24 and \$516,343 in FY25.

The twenty-eighth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 8 sniper scope units for the State Police Tactical Team. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$7,140 in FY24 only.

The twenty-ninth initiative provides one-time funding to replace two sniper night vision units for the State Police Tactical Team. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$7,350 in FY24 only.

The thirtieth initiative provides one-time funding to replace the thermal imaging equipment. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$22,750 in FY24 only.

The thirty-first initiative provides one-time funding to purchase a second unmanned aerial vehicle for use by the State Police Evidence Response Team. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$6,392 in FY24 only.

The thirty-second initiative provides one-time funding to purchase a thermal equipped unmanned aerial vehicle for the Maine State Police Crime Lab. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$3,500 in FY24 only.

The next ten initiatives all involve necessary repairs, replacements, and repairs at the Troop Barracks and total \$89,932 in one-time funding in Highway Funds.

The first of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace an air conditioning unit at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$1,925 in FY24 only.

The second of these initiatives provides one-time funding to repair siding and stairs at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$5,357 in FY24 only.

The third of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace an exterior door at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$3,928 in FY24 only.

The fourth of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace a generator at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the Capital Expenditures in the Highway Fund by \$9,800 in FY24 only.

The fifth of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace a garage bay door at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$3,928 in FY24 only.

The sixth of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace an interior tiled floor at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$2,500 in FY24 only.

The seventh of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace the roof at the State Police Garage. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$10,713 in FY24 only.

The eighth of these initiatives provides one-time funding to resurface the parking lot at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$35,711 in FY24 only.

The ninth of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace the concrete entry at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$7,142 in FY24 only.

The tenth of these initiatives provides one-time funding to repair the entrance area and provide office space for new State Police personnel at one of the troop barracks. This request will increase the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$8,928 in FY24 only.

State Police Support

The next program, State Police Support, begins on page 25. The funding in this program provides clerical support for the field troops of the State Police and consists of seven Office Associate II positions.

The only initiative in this program provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$770 in both FY24 and FY25.

Traffic Safety

The next program, Traffic Safety, begins on page 26. This program provides accident reconstruction and training services and maintains the statewide crash reporting system, including the Airwing operations. The Maine State Police Airwing consists of two Cessna 182 fixed wing aircraft, which are strategically stationed for regional response to mission requests. The State Police Airwing is often utilized for traffic enforcement along the interstate from Kittery to Houlton, and aerial photos of traffic crash and crime scenes, as well as for conducting searches for lost or wanted persons.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and adjusts the baseline budget in the Highway Fund by \$7,709 in FY24 and FY25.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$946 in both FY24 and FY25.

Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement

The final program to be discussed is the Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement program which begins on page 27. This unit, referred to as CVEU, oversees and enforces the laws regarding vehicle size and weight for the protection of Maine's infrastructure. The unit verifies compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations through both roadside enforcement efforts and terminal safety reviews of Motor Carriers, to reduce commercial vehicle-related crashes statewide. Roadside enforcement includes the verification of valid commercial driver's licenses, hours-of-service for drivers, vehicle safety inspections, and the weighing of vehicles.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and adjusts the baseline budget in the Highway Fund by \$34,671 in FY24 and FY25.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to insurance premium rates and increases the All Other in the Highway Fund by \$5,445 in both FY24 and FY25.

The third initiative provides funding for the proposed reclassification of one Office Associate II position to an Office Specialist I position and provides funding for related All Other costs. This reclassification has an effective date of July 15th, 2022. This increases Personal Services in the Highway Fund by \$8,928 in FY24 and \$5,060 in FY25 and increases All Other in the Highway Fund by \$110 in FY24 and \$111 in FY25.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.