

TESTIMONY
OF
MICHAEL J SAUSCHUCK
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and
Transportation

Hearing Date: February 28th, 2025

"An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General 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, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, 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 the biennial budget.

Overall Budget

Maine – like many states – is facing a tight budget environment. The Mills Administration has spent months carefully developing a balanced budget proposal to preserve the programs lawmakers and Maine people support, including education, revenue sharing, public safety, higher education, and school meals, while also protecting the long-term fiscal health of Maine.

Ultimately, we took a balanced approach: one that makes some investments - including operational needs such as technology efficiencies, health and safety improvements, collective bargaining impacts, etc. - that proposes some spending cuts, and that makes some targeted revenue

increases. We know these proposals are difficult and appreciate that you will consider them with an open mind.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months to enact a budget that supports our greatest asset of all: the people of Maine.

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 693 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.

Initiatives Impacting Multiple Programs

Before discussing each of our programs individually I would like to start with the three items that impact multiple programs in our department; increases to statewide technology services, reclassification/reorganizations, and funding provided to align with anticipated revenues. We have included a supplemental document (page 6) for reference and to assist you in navigating the budget document to find where each of these items can be located.

Statewide Technology Services

Increases to statewide technology services impact the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services. Funding

is provided for these increases in State Police (A-601) and Turnpike Enforcement (A-609).

Reclassification/Reorganization

There is a longstanding process in place to evaluate proper classification of positions and determine, through a functional job analysis, whether a position meets the requirements for reclassification, including pay adjustment. The State's collective bargaining unit agreements include negotiated language related to this process. Reclasses may be employee or management initiated. Approved employee-initiated actions include a retroactive pay component back to the date the request was signed. Only approved reclasses are included in our budget requests. These initiatives are to request funding for the approved action, which is required before the reclassification can be processed and paid.

Anticipated Revenue Alignment

There are a number of initiatives in the department providing funding to align with anticipated revenues and these adjustments are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024, forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee. Funding for these alignments is being requested for the State Police (A-599) (A-606), and Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (A-608).

Lewiston Tragedy

On October 25, 2023, a mentally ill and military trained suspect shot and killed 18 people and injured at least 13 more in two separate locations in Lewiston, Maine. The individual was armed with a high-powered rifle, attached scope and laser sight and was able to flee the scene. This was a planned, orchestrated, and unprecedented attack.

What followed the shooting was a massive police response that provided emergency medical aid to the injured, located the suspect, protected the public from further harm and provided extensive victim services.

Maine State Police were charged with the largest manhunt in Maine history, coordinating with over 400 law enforcement officers, 16 Tactical Teams, and numerous federal agencies. Working with New England State Police and federal partners the Maine State Police coordinated the crime scene processing at both shooting scenes and other locations to document the tragic events of that night. Maine State Police coordinated the investigation and the interviews of witnesses while notifying the families of those who were killed. State Police also coordinated press and law enforcement briefings as well as social media posts and updates for the public that reached millions. In the days that followed the discovery of the suspect's body, the Maine State Police established a website to enable the sharing of information with the public regarding the facts of the tragedy.

Over 200 Maine State Troopers (almost 2/3 of our entire agency) responded to the scene, ensuring that no more civilians and no law enforcement officers were killed or injured, ultimately locating the suspect in under 49 hours. As expected in such an unprecedented event, there are numerous lessons learned that should be applied to future operations, if applicable.

The Independent Commission to Investigate the Facts of the Tragedy in Lewiston issued its final report on August 20th, 2024, charging the Maine State Police to conduct a full After-Action Review with an independent evaluation by an entity with policing expertise. The subsequent internal After-Action Review of the response and investigation into this horrendous incident revealed that many things were done very well by the Maine State Police, but also identified some vulnerabilities related to staffing and equipment.

From these efforts there are a number of initiatives that are necessary to ensure that the Maine State Police, the largest police agency in Maine and the only agency with the capability to coordinate any similar incident of this magnitude, is properly equipped and staffed to be prepared should another tragic day occur in our great state that we once thought was immune from such an atrocity.

These initiatives can be found on page A-600 Initiative #1, page A-600 Initiative #2, page A-601 Initiative #4, page A-602 Initiative #1, page A-604 Initiative #2, page A-604 Initiative #3, and page A-606 Initiative #1.

Department of Public Safety Supplemental Document to Biennial Budget Testimony

Increases to Statewide Technology

- State Police (A-601)
- Turnpike Enforcement (A-609)

Reclassifications and Reorganizations

1. State Police (A-600) - Provides funding for the approved range change of 9 Computer Forensic Analyst positions from range 27 to range 28.

Provides Funding to Align with Anticipated Revenue

- State Police (A-599)
- State Police (A-606)
- Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (A-608)

Lewiston Tragedy Initiatives

- A-600 (Initiative #1)
- A-600 (Initiative #2)
- A-601 (Initiative #4)
- A-602 (Initiative #1)
- A-604 (Initiative #2)
- A-604 (Initiative #3)
- A-606 (Initiative #1)

State Police

The Maine State Police Program begins on page A-599. 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 found on page A-599 provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. *There are a number of these adjustments in the department, and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.*

The second initiative found on page A-600 establishes one Wellness Coordinator position to support the wellness and resiliency needs of all 479 members of the State Police, both sworn and civilian, by providing mental health services and conducting critical incident stress debriefs. The position would also provide supervision for the Member Support Team which currently provides peer support services for the agency and many others. *This initiative is associated with the Lewiston After Action Report and is necessary to accomplish our recommendations in a timely manner.*

The third initiative establishes 4 State Police Detective Corporal positions intended to serve as Evidence Response Technicians in the Crime Lab to help the Sergeant keep up with record numbers of homicide investigations and other criminal work. Currently the Maine State Police has

one full time evidence Sergeant who responds to every homicide scene and is on-call around the clock. With this fulltime responsibility, he is overwhelmed with two years of record-breaking volume, special assignments relating to expert testimony, managing all aspects of the Evidence Response Team including the Department's Evidence Tracking System while also coordinating and training members in Bloodstain Pattern Analysis, Shooting Reconstruction, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and lidar scanners. Adding these additional full-time senior members of the Evidence Response Team will allow an on-call rotation to ensure a proper response and shared responsibility for scene processing. *This initiative is associated with the Lewiston After Action Report and is necessary to accomplish our recommendations in a timely manner.*

The fourth initiative provides funding for the approved range change of 9 Computer Forensic Analyst positions from range 27 to range 28.

The fifth initiative provides one-time funding to replace the roof at the K-9 office, which is overdue for repair.

The next initiative is found on page A-601 and provides funding to resurface the parking lot and driveway at the Alfred barracks.

The seventh initiative provides funding for increased debt service costs associated with the purchase of State Police vehicles on a regular vehicle replacement schedule. With the increased cost in vehicles recognized over the last few years (47%) this funding will be necessary to meet our loan obligations in FY26 and FY27.

The eight initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of

Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The next initiative establishes one Behavioral Health Coordinator Position to oversee our existing Behavioral Health Liaison program. The program has been a runaway success, diverting mental health calls to Behavioral Health Liaisons and getting citizens the appropriate care they need. This position will help supervise the existing five Coordinators, bring consistency to the program, and act as a yellow flag liaison to our Law Enforcement Officer Partners. *This initiative is associated with the Lewiston After Action Report and is necessary to accomplish our recommendations in a timely manner.*

The tenth initiative begins on page A-602 and establishes one Lieutenant position to serve as a full-time Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Incident Management Assistance Team while also coordinating major events and overall training. The current commander also serves as the commander of the Maine Turnpike Troop which is already a full-time job. *This initiative is associated with the Lewiston After Action Report and is necessary to accomplish our recommendations in a timely manner.*

The next initiative establishes 3 State Police Specialist positions assigned full-time to the tactical team to address not only the active threat training needs highlighted in the Lewiston After Action Report but the drastic increase in the Tactical Team deployments that pull team members from their primary role within the agency. The tactical team responded to 133 calls in 2024. That's twice the amount of call outs from just 4 years ago when the team deployed 63 times in 2020.

The twelfth initiative provides funding for the annual cost of the Maine Information and Analysis Center records management and information system which allows for audits and inspections. This system started as a MaineIT solution but a few years ago it was determined that it would be more

affordable in the long run to contract with a vendor as the current system had become outdated and expensive.

The next fifteen initiatives starting on the bottom of page A-602 and ending on page A-605 are all one-time funding requests and are critical to the safety of our troopers as they are requests for replacements for items that are beyond their useful life or for new equipment that is currently not provided. You will also see some initiatives that are not necessarily associated with safety but instead are one-time funding requests that will dramatically increase efficiency in critical areas such as the Crime Lab. The total amount of these fifteen one-time funding initiatives is \$1.8 million.

The first of these initiatives provides one-time funding to replace two bomb suits for the six-member State Police Bomb Team. The suits currently have a 5-year life expectancy and we are trying to get on a cycle of replacing two suits every other year.

The second initiative found at the top of Page A-603 provides one-time funding for the purchase of one Bright Beam Blue Laser for the crime lab. This forensic laser is an alternative lighting system that allows our latent fingerprint section to operate with greater efficiency when chemically processing latent prints and also allows for superior photographic evidence collection.

The third initiative provides one-time funding for the purchase of a marine sonar device which is a critical piece of equipment when searching for bodies or vehicles. The current piece of equipment is over ten years old and is an outdated piece of equipment.

The fourth initiative in this grouping provides one-time funding for the purchase of a throwable robot for the tactical team and allows for remote viewing of high-risk critical incidents while mitigating the risk to Tactical Team members.

The fifth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 25 handgun lights for the tactical team which have reached the end of their useful life.

The sixth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 26 rifles for the tactical team that will reach the end of their useful life in September of 2026. The average useful life for a rifle is 7 years.

The next initiative found at the top of page A-604 provides one-time funding to replace infrared lasers for the tactical team that will reach the end of their useful life in September of 2026. The average useful life for these lasers is 7 years.

The next two initiatives provide for one-time funding to purchase 350 plate carriers and 350 helmets for all sworn officers. The Lewiston Tragedy showed some vulnerabilities in regard to who was able to be assigned to certain tasks as the Tactical Team was the only group that was equipped with vests that were able to provide additional protection from a rifle round. *This initiative is associated with the Lewiston After Action Report and is necessary to accomplish our recommendations in a timely manner.*

The tenth initiative provides one-time funding to replace 2 ballistic shields which will reach the end of their useful life in July of 2025. The average useful life for these shields is 5 years.

The eleventh initiative provides for one-time funding to replace 10 sniper rifles which will reach the end of their useful life in July of 2025. The average useful life for these rifles is 7 years.

The next initiative found at the top of page A-605 provides one-time funding to replace 25 ballistic vests which will reach the end of their useful life in June of 2026. The average useful life for these vests is 5 years.

The next initiative provides one-time funding to replace eight 40 MM launchers which will reach the end of their useful life in June of 2026. The launchers are the agency's primary less lethal gas deployment option and they have a 10 year life expectancy.

The fourteenth initiative provides one-time funding for the purchase of an unmanned aerial vehicle that can be linked to existing software and allows for the production of incredibly high-quality point clouds when coupled with the Faro software.

The fifteenth and final initiative in this grouping provides one-time funding for the purchase of a Faro Scanner Upgrade. The lidar scanners provide scientifically repeatable measurements for crime scene reconstruction. A Faro Focus Premium scanner is twice as fast as older models with 150-meter range so it will scan faster and further. This means fewer and faster scans, which help expedite processing crime scenes, which may be critical depending on location. It also allows us to work with our NESPAC partners and other investigators like the FBI, Bangor and Portland, which also utilize this platform.

The next initiative provides funding for increased dispatch costs, which have increased approximately 27% since the FY 20/21 Biennium and Maine State Police did not make a request to increase the baseline in FY 24/25.

The initiative found at the top of page A-606 establishes one Public Service Coordinator I position and is intended to be a full-time Public Information Officer dedicated specifically to the Maine State Police. Inquiries and communication with the public are constant 24/7 and this requires a dedicated individual to communicate internally with the Command Staff, Lieutenants, Sergeants, and Troopers. A full-time agency specific position of this kind would also allow us to spend more time and resources proactively educating the general public. Educational programing is always a two-way street and it provides prime opportunities to build trust and relationships with those we serve. *This*

initiative is associated with the Lewiston After Action Report and is necessary to accomplish our recommendations in a timely manner.

The second initiative on this page provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number of these adjustments in the department, and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024, forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

The third initiative on this page provides funding for the increase in cost of fuel for State Police Vehicles. Maine State Police have an average usage of 700,000 gallons of gas per calendar year. The fuel costs are currently budgeted at 700,000 gallons at \$2.25 per gallon with a total baseline fuel allocation of \$1.58 million. Increased funding for an estimated per gallon price of \$3.25 is needed.

The final initiative for this program provides one-time funding for 4 specialized digital cameras which are needed for the four newest Emergency Response Team members.

Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement

The next program to be discussed is the Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement program which begins on page A-608. 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 only initiative in this program was discussed earlier and can be seen below.

The only initiative in this program provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number of these adjustments in the department, and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

Turnpike Enforcement

The Maine State Police provides full law enforcement services to areas that do not have 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. Turnpike Enforcement (Troop G) patrols the Maine Turnpike 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure safety and enforce the laws of the State.

The first initiative provides funding for the purchase of seven (7) hybrid vehicles for turnpike enforcement consistent with an established vehicle replacement schedule.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

Language Part WWW

The final item I will be testifying on today is Language Part WWW which can be found on page 123. This Part authorizes the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and the Department of Public Safety to enter into financial arrangements in fiscal year 2025-26 and 2026-27 for the acquisition of motor vehicles for the State Police.

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