

TESTIMONY
OF
MICHAEL J SAUSCHUCK
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Hearing Date: March 5th, 2026

"An Act Making Supplemental 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, 2026 and June 30, 2027"

Good afternoon, 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 LD2213, the FY26 Supplemental Budget.

Overall Budget

This is the final budget proposal from the Administration. The proposal delivers financial relief to Maine people, preserves programs lawmakers and Maine people support, and addresses some emergent issues, including impacts of new federal legislation. Governor Mills' guiding belief has always been that our strongest asset is the people of Maine and that's why this budget, like those in the past, seeks to invest in and support them. We look forward to working with the Legislature in the coming weeks to enact a balanced budget that supports Maine people and protects the fiscal health of our state.

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 699 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.

The sum of all Department of Public Safety initiatives is \$270,374 in FY26 and \$1,130,277 in FY27 which is only .27% of the entire Highway Fund Budget.

State Police

I will begin today with the Maine State Police Program on page 1. 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 transfers one State Police Detective position and one SBI Specialist position from the Gambling Control Board program, 100% General Fund to the State Police program, 65% General Fund and 35% Highway Fund and provides funding for All Other related costs. The Gambling Control Unit and Maine State Police agreed that these two positions are needed more urgently in the Maine State Police program and that transferring them is more appropriate to reflect the job duties now assigned to each position.

The second initiative establishes one State Police Lieutenant and one State Police Sergeant Position and provides funding for related All Other costs. This initiative is no longer needed and may be removed by the committee.

The next initiative establishes 4 State Police Detective positions and provides funding for related All Other costs. These four positions will be assigned to the Executive Protection Unit.

The fourth initiative for this program provides funding for the approved reorganization range change of 5 Senior Laboratory Scientist positions from range 29 to range 31 and All Other related cost. 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.

The next initiative, found on page 2, provides funding for an increase in rent for the Northern Field Troop Barracks. The Northern Field Troop has leased their current space in Ellsworth for over twenty years. The building needs substantial work and the landlord has decided to not continue the lease. The Department has been working with the Bureau of General Services on finding a new space and they have determined that a space that meets current operational needs will require this additional funding.

The sixth initiative establishes one State Police Corporal position, one State Police Lieutenant position and 3 State Police Specialist positions and provides funding for All Other related costs for

additional staffing related to the Extreme Risk Protection Act. This initiative also provides funding for 5 Ford Police Interceptor Utility Hybrid vehicles for those 5 positions. These positions are necessary to fulfill the obligations of An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act which went into effect on February 22nd, 2026.

The seventh initiative establishes one Forensic Chemist II position, one DNA Forensic Analyst position and provides funding for related All Other costs, a mobile office unit and a contracted trainer for the tracking system. This initiative establishes the positions necessary for the Department of Public Safety to establish, operate, and maintain a tracking system for all completed forensic examination kits which includes an inventory of all kits as well as an annual report on the new tracking system in accordance with the Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits in the Possession of Law Enforcement.

The final initiative transfers one State Police Lieutenant position from the Traffic Safety program, 100% Highway Fund to the State Police program, 65% General Fund and 35% Highway Fund and provides funding for related All Other costs. This position is being reassigned to supervise Troopers assigned to task force positions with MDEA, FBI Safe Streets, and the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Traffic Safety

The next program, Traffic Safety, found on page 4, provides accident reconstruction and training services and maintains the statewide crash reporting system, including the Airwing operations. 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 in this program provides funding for the approved reorganization of one State Police Pilot position to a State Police Lieutenant. This was a management initiative reclassification and has been approved through the process described earlier in my testimony.

The second and final initiative transfers one State Police Lieutenant position from the Traffic Safety program, 100% Highway Fund to the State Police program, 65% General Fund and 35% Highway Fund and provides funding for related All Other costs. This is the other side of the transfer that I discussed earlier in my testimony.

Language Part F

This language part can be found on pages 23 and 24. This Part authorizes the Department of Public Safety to transfer Personal Services to the All Other and Capital Expenditures line categories in an amount up to \$320,614 in fiscal year 2025-2026 and \$35,784 in fiscal year 2026-2027. This transfer will fund a contract for firearms examiner services (\$35,784 annually), consoles at three Emergency Communication Centers (\$268,380), a heat pump (\$3,500) a generator for the Pittsfield barracks (\$4,200), and an update to the security system at the Bangor barracks (\$8,750).

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