

**TESTIMONY
OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. SAUSCHUCK
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 25, 2021

“An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021, June 30, 2022, and June 30, 2023”

Good afternoon Senator Diamond and Representative Martin, 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 (DPS). I am here today to testify in support of the biennial budget, LD 161.

Department Overview

DPS 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 625 positions spread across ten bureaus. The Bureaus are Administration, Capitol Police, Consolidated Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal, Gambling Control, Highway Safety, Maine Criminal Justice Academy, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Maine State Police.

As Maine experienced the impact of COVID-19 and agencies were directed to implement curtailments, the Bureaus within DPS reviewed all expenditures to determine areas where savings could be achieved. DPS employees were asked to share any thoughts they had for possible cost savings measures that could be implemented. The DPS family rose to this challenge and many innovative ideas were shared which were implemented and result in the savings reflected in the initiatives we will discuss today.

Administration – Public Safety

I will begin today on page A-16 of the budget document 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. There are no Highway Fund initiatives related to the Commissioner's Office.

Bureau of Highway Safety

The next program, the Bureau of Highway Safety, begins on page A-18. 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 is also responsible for the annual planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the Highway Safety Plan for Maine. The only initiative in this program provides a Highway Fund reduction due to savings in the cost of office supplies. As part of a cost-savings initiative in FY21, a process was implemented to use price match features and lower-priced alternatives for supply purchases which will result in cost savings. The request includes Highway Fund decreases of \$329 in both years.

Motor Vehicle Inspection

The next program on page A-19 is the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program which administers and enforces the motor vehicle inspection laws including issuing stickers and

authorizing garages to perform inspections. There are no Highway Fund initiatives related to this program.

State Police

The Maine State Police Program begins on page A-20. The Maine State Police provide full law enforcement services to areas that do not have police departments. Troopers respond to all manners of calls for service such as any 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 reduces the funding for technology costs through the Office of Information Technology (OIT). These reductions were the result of a detailed review of OIT costs and services being provided. Non-critical services were reduced or removed to achieve savings. Savings were achieved by removing landlines, fax lines, and reducing the number of OIT personnel working on Maine State Police applications. The decrease is \$224,679 in Highway Fund All Other for FY22 and \$221,057 for FY23.

The next initiative provides funds for the approved reclassification of two Planning and Research Associate II positions to Criminal Intelligence Analysts, effective July 26, 2019, and August 7, 2019. The Highway Fund Personnel Services increases by \$7,810 in FY22 and \$2,750 in FY23. Highway Fund All Other is increased by \$195 in FY22 and \$69 in FY23. One of these positions is fully funded through a Homeland Security grant and the reclassification results in increases to the Federal Expenditures Fund. For both of these reclassifications, the FY22

increases include the retroactive pay owed to the employees.

The next initiative reduces the funding for debt service retirement costs to meet General Fund and Highway Fund cost reduction efforts. In FY21, the Certificate of Participation Financing used to purchase Maine State Police vehicles was reviewed and restructured and these changes result in cost savings during FY22 and FY23. Savings were achieved in FY22 by reducing the number of vehicles purchased in FY21 from 56 to 38, eliminating the down payment, and extending the payback period of the financing from 24 to 36 months. The FY23 savings will be achieved by elimination of the down payment and repayment over 42 months. The savings achieved by this restructuring resulted in Highway Fund All Other decreases of \$423,485 in FY22 and \$349,854 in FY23. This is a one-time saving for FY22 and FY23 only.

The next initiative in this program provides Highway Fund reductions due to savings in the cost of office supplies as explained previously. The request includes Highway Fund decreases of \$12,319 in FY22 and \$12,002 in FY23.

The next initiative provides a Highway Fund reduction due to savings in the cost of cell phone services. As part of a cost-savings initiative in FY21, a detailed review of the current cell phone costs was performed. Lines that were deemed non-critical were turned off and renegotiation discussions were held with each of the cell phone carriers. These actions led to cost savings which are reflected as Highway Fund decreases of \$8,969 in both years.

The next initiative on the top of page A-22 reflects savings achieved as a result of innovative thinking from the Maine State Police garage employees regarding changes that could be made to achieve ongoing vehicle maintenance savings. The change to maintenance schedules and oil weights results in Highway Fund All Other savings of \$44,845 each year.

The final initiative reflects savings achieved in the cost of gasoline. Maine State Police personnel drive approximately ten million miles per year. These savings are achieved by

implementing a process to ensure all of the benefits of the current gas purchase contract in place are taken advantage of and the additional mileage achieved due to the maintenance changes noted above are accounted for. The Highway Fund All Other savings is \$37,670 each year.

State Police – Support

The next program starts at the top of page A-23 and is the State Police – Support Program. This program funds 10 office support positions at Headquarters and the barracks around the state. There are no Highway Fund initiatives for this program.

Traffic Safety

The next program is also on page A-23. The Traffic Safety 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. There are no Highway Fund initiatives for this program.

Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement

The next program to be discussed is the Traffic Safety – Commercial Vehicle Enforcement program which begins on page A-24. 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 provides Highway Fund reductions

due to savings in the cost of office supplies as explained previously. The request includes Highway Fund decreases of \$513 in both years.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.