Department of Information Technology
Fiscal Year 2023 Capital Budget

TESTIMONY OF
Michael G. Leahy, Secretary

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee
The Honorable Craig J. Zucker, Chair
February 15, 2022

House Appropriations Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee
The Honorable Ben Barns, Chair
February 16, 2022

The Department of Information Technology has one Capital project on which we are currently working and that is the statewide, interoperable, Maryland FiRST 700 MHz Public Safety Communications System. I am happy to report that 2021 was another successful year for Maryland FiRST. For the first time since the start of this effort, all Maryland counties, Baltimore City, Annapolis and Ocean City are now either Primary, Limited Primary or Interoperable Users of Maryland FiRST. Currently, the system has 25,000 primary users and over 50,000 interoperable users from 81 different State agencies, counties, Federal and neighboring state jurisdictions. This is a significant accomplishment towards achieving interoperable, mission critical voice communications throughout the state and demonstrates that this radio system has been widely adopted by the public safety community.

We continue to add new radio communication sites as part of our Coverage Improvement Program. Sites at Taylorsville and Sykesville have been added, creating a new simulcast cell in Carroll County, and new sites at the Maryland State Police Barrack in LaVale and Swallow Falls are currently in progress. In addition, we have taken other actions with backup power and redundant backhaul paths to improve the overall resiliency and reliability of the network.

On the project side, four of the five phases have been completed. The infrastructure buildout for Phase 5, which includes the National Capitol Region and Southern Maryland counties, has been completed and coverage testing has been successfully completed within all 5 counties. Once the new Ethernet backhaul network within Phase 5 is fully tested and operating at a public safety standard, we will go live for operational users.

Our FY 2023 Capital budget request is for $13,084,000. This funding will support two major efforts.

The first is the aforementioned Coverage Improvement Program which will add an additional 16 radio sites throughout the State between FY 23 to FY 27. The Coverage Improvement Program addresses radio coverage gaps that have been identified in various parts of the State. The original coverage goal for the project was 95% on-street portable coverage, that's an officer, outside the vehicle with a hand-held radio. This follow-on program will look at ensuring any coverage gaps are filled and to provide additional in-building coverage for schools, government buildings and malls, particularly in the eight counties that use Maryland FiRST as their primary public Safety communications system. This will support the public safety response to incidents, which may

include active shooter situations. The two proposed new radio sites for FY 23 are at Harvey Gummel in Carroll County and at the Greenbriar State Park in Washington County.

The second major effort is the T1 to Ethernet backhaul network conversion for Phases I through IV. The Ethernet design work should be completed by the vendor by this summer, and once the final design is approved by the State, the physical conversion should start soon afterwards.

We thank the Committee for its consideration and ask that our FY 2023 Capital Budget request be approved. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Leahy
Secretary
Department of Information Technology