



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

STATE OF MARYLAND
MILITARY DEPARTMENT
FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

TIMOTHY E. GOWEN
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Maryland Military Department

Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget Response to Department of Legislative Services Budget Analysis

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee
Senator Melony Griffith, Chair
February 3, 2022**

**House Appropriations Committee
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee
Delegate Antonio (Tony) Bridges, Chair
February 2, 2022**

Introduction

The Maryland Military Department (MMD) appreciates this opportunity to update the committee on the activities of the Department and to respond to the recommendations and requested updates contained in the Operating Budget analysis prepared by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS).

The Department's responses to the recommendations and requested updates of the Department of Legislative Services:

DLS Requested: *"Could you please explain and identify the costs associated with mobilization of the Guardsmen to assist with the State's COVID-19 response?" (DLS Analysis page 5)*

Agency Response:

The Maryland National Guard (MDNG) was initially mobilized on March 16, 2020 to assist with COVID-19 efforts. At this time, over 1,100 Guardsmen were deployed in State Active Duty (SAD) status. The costs associated with COVID-19 were initially to be covered by the 50 States and territories. The National Emergency Declaration by

the President alleviated the financial burden on the States, as they were now able to seek full reimbursement from the Federal Government for costs associated with the pandemic. While the MDNG transitioned to Federal Title 32 status on April 3, 2020, a small contingent of Guardsmen remained on SAD status until the middle of May 2020 for duties that were not covered by Title 32, such as cybersecurity support. Once the MDNG converted to Title 32 status, most direct costs, such as payroll, were borne by the Federal Government.

For mobilizations exceeding 30 days, such as COVID-19, the impact on MMD facilities and personnel are extremely consequential, however. Already overburdened maintenance employees must be redirected from other locations to support these facilities during mobilization. There is also an increased usage of building cleaning and maintenance supplies. There is a higher usage of state vehicles resulting in increased fuel and vehicle maintenance costs. Additionally, there is an increased degradation of facility equipment requiring more frequent preventative maintenance actions and parts replacement.

Similarly, there are increases in utilities and water usage at these facilities. Building automation systems (BAS) must be adjusted for the increased facility usage, thereby increasing utilities costs. An example of this is the Olney Readiness Center, where a Guardsman attempted an adjustment of the BAS system. This caused system failure and resulted in thousands of dollars in damage that required repair by an external vendor. Additionally, the use of the Olney facility created a 200% increase in water usage, necessitating an examination to determine whether the increase was due to actual usage or potential water leakage. Another example was the failure of a septic system at the La Plata Readiness Center, which was housing approximately 100 Guardsmen. This resulted in a few thousand dollars in damage and led to potential design improvements being necessitated at the facility.

DLS Requested: "The department should comment on the projects that this additional funding will be used for, as well as the impact that the number of facilities in fully functional status has on current operations." (DLS analysis page 7)

Agency Response:

MMD will use the increased funding to support additional preventative maintenance contracts, sustainment of current equipment and systems, and for life-cycle replacement of minor equipment systems.

The percentage of facilities in functional status only represents the 35 major facilities captured by National Guard Bureau (NGB) metrics, to which most of the funding is directed for maintenance and repairs. In total, MMD maintains 288 buildings, many of which do not receive federal funding. In terms of impact on current operations, the majority of maintenance actions are performed by MMD employees rather than outside vendors, therefore, those personnel available are prioritized to maintain readiness at the primary facilities for the potential of activation events. In the event that maintenance

projects are deferred, this can lead to voiding manufacturer's warranties and increased repair and replacement costs. Poorly maintained facilities also inhibit MMD and MDNG's ability to operate efficiently and hire/recruit and retain qualified personnel.

DLS Requested: "The department should comment on the decline in troop strength in fiscal 2021, the extent to which the pandemic has influenced troop strength, and the efforts that will be taken for MDNG to reach its goal." (DLS analysis page 7)

Agency Response:

Maryland Army National Guard (MDARNG) personnel strength reported was 4,653 Soldiers assigned and 4,726 authorized positions, or 96.5%. MDARNG strength continues to be above 90%.

Maryland Air National Guard (MDANG) personnel strength reported was 1,378 Airmen assigned and 1,567 authorized positions, or 87.9%. MDANG plans to improve assigned strength in 2022 and 2023 by hiring more recruiters and opening two store fronts, one in Frederick County and the other in Harford County. Additionally, MDANG will be revamping school zone canvassing, training plans, and marketing plans to increase leads.

MDNG is representative of the general population of Maryland, and with that has experienced employment challenges similar to other organizations. MDNG will continue to focus on recruitment to ensure that the MDNG can continue to complete its mission.

DLS Requested: "The department should comment on the status of the FCA facility upgrade projects." (DLS analysis page 8)

Agency Response:

The FCA facility upgrades have not been completed. MMD requested that the Department of General Services (DGS) delay the start of construction for the FCA facility upgrades contract from January 2022 to June 2022, which will provide MMD time needed to find cadet housing on post within the Edgewood Area, Aberdeen Proving Ground. DGS was able to provide the contractor with notice to proceed on or about June 15, 2022 without a major impact to the contract.

DLS Requested: "The department should comment on the efforts to resume classes for FCA students and recruit staff for the program." (DLS analysis page 9)

Agency Response:

The Freestate Challenge Academy (FCA) conducted intake of 87 cadets for Class 57 on July 11, 2021. NGB authorized Class 57's size to be reduced by 25% of the normal class size to reduce issues associated with social distancing. 63 cadets of Class 57

graduated FCA on November 20, 2021. FCA Class 58 was similarly reduced 25% in starting size. FCA conducted intake of 76 cadets for Class 58 on January 9, 2022. There are currently 58 cadets still enrolled in the program.

MMD HR maintains a continuous posting for FCA cadre positions on both JobApps and Indeed, in an effort to attract a larger pool of qualified applicants. HR provides the FCA Director with a list of qualified applicants every 2 weeks. HR works with FCA staff to expedite the hiring process for cadre positions. Also, HR and FCA staff held a virtual job fair to promote awareness of FCA vacancies and to attract applicants. These efforts led to the hiring of 15 permanent and contractual cadre. In addition, FCA has hired 21 other permanent and contractual personnel, such as counselors, in support of the FCA program.

FCA has not changed operations since the JCR report response in August, but intends to resume operations with class size of 100% of capacity as soon as the pandemic conditions will safely allow and upon completion of FCA facility renovations. Renovations are expected to be completed around February 2022.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions: “Concur with Governor’s allowance.” (DLS Analysis page 10)

Agency Response:

The Department concurs with the operating budget recommendation.

The 2021 Joint Chairmen’s Report requested that the Military Department prepare one report:

Impact of COVID-19 on FCA: “Committee narrative requested that the Military Department provide information on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on FCA.” (DLS Analysis page 11)

Agency Response:

The Department concurs with the operating budget analysis.