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Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget
Response to the Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Budget and Tax Committee
Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Cory McCray
Friday, February 4, 2022

Introduction

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) 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).

Department Response to the DLS Analysis

Operating Budget Summary

Maryland Mesonet

The department should comment on the State's need for the Maryland Mesonet, when it could be expected to be deployed, and further identify a spending plan for the funds. (DLS analysis, pg. 5)

The goal of the Maryland Mesonet is to develop and operate a world-class atmospheric monitoring system to deliver reliable, timely information to residents and enhance critical public safety decision-making. The mesonet will also support agricultural, economic, and transportation operations.

Additional weather observations will reduce any forecast “data holes”, which could impact MDEM’s ability to issue timely and accurate public information and warnings regarding hazards in their area. The Maryland Mesonet, by providing reliable, timely, and accurate weather information, will help reduce costs and drive down financial hardships for Maryland residents and businesses during disasters. Benefits of the Maryland Mesonet include:



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- Supports decision-making for officials (public health, schools, etc.) and **reduces delay in** National Weather Service watch/warning/advisory/briefing products.
- Near real-time community-level monitoring of weather conditions.
- Improved situational awareness during rapidly changing weather conditions.
- Quantifying impacts to infrastructure from natural hazards.
- Enhancing public safety planning and identifying long term community risk.
- Data can be leveraged when requesting Presidential Disaster Declarations.
- Enhanced drought, air quality, fire weather monitoring, and climate tracking.
- Sensors provide ground truth, especially in coastal and rural environments.

Research and development will take place in SFY23 Q1, with weather stations set-up to begin in SFY23 Q2-Q3. We expect for the Maryland Mesonet to be fully deployed and functioning by SFY24 Q2.

The \$4,000,000 cost for initial build-out is a one-time expense. Yearly maintenance costs are estimated to be a fraction of the Mesonet start-up costs. MDEM will continue to work to identify a long-term funding source.

Maryland State Firemen's Association Widows' and Orphans' Fund

MDEM should comment on whether the increased funding for the grant will be one-time or ongoing. (DLS Analysis, pg. 6)

This is an ongoing increase to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund.

Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

MDEM should comment on the adequacy of these funds to support the needs of FSRC and whether this funding will be one-time or ongoing. (DLS Analysis, pg. 6)

The Governor's allowance is adequate for the anticipated support needs of the Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) through FY23. The legislation which formed the FSRC requires the Council to recommend if it should sunset in a report due November 2022, and it also requires the Council to recommend a permanent location and structure for the Council. If the Council recommends to continue operations under MDEM past 2023, MDEM will require on-going funding to support the Food System Resiliency Council staffing requirement. If the Council determines to sunset in 2023 or to relocate to a different state agency or form an independent body, and MDEM is no longer required to staff the Council, MDEM will not require continued Food System Resiliency Council funding.



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Key Observations

1. Tracking and Reporting of COVID-19 Public Assistance Funding

MDEM should comment on the amount of public assistance funding that has been obligated but not yet reimbursed from FEMA, an estimation on how much the State can claim, how much reimbursement the State anticipates receiving beyond those funds discussed above, and an estimation of when any potential additional funds would be added to the State budget. (DLS Analysis, pg. 7)

FEMA has obligated \$1.044 billion in Public Assistance funds, with \$740 million paid to the state. It is estimated that under the current declared disasters, the state can expect to receive an additional \$314 million in FY23. It is important to note that federal public assistance funding is determined by state and local funding needs during the time period identified for the eligible disaster by the federal government, which could result in changes to the identified estimated funding expectations for FY23. Per standard practice, we will continue to work with DBM as we receive news on additional funding obligations.

2. Task Force on Preventing the Countering Domestic Terrorism Report

MDEM should describe in greater detail how the federal fiscal year 2021 HSGP award for the State was expended across different programs and for what purposes. MDEM should comment on whether it has data to measure the extent to which domestic terrorism is a threat in Maryland and for measuring the ways in which the agency makes progress in deterring and preventing domestic terrorism. (DLS Analysis, pg. 8)

MDEM has expended FY21 HSGP funds to build capabilities in support of the following national priorities:

- combating domestic violent extremism,
- cybersecurity enhancement,
- protection of soft targets/crowded places,
- intelligence and information sharing and addressing emergency threats to include: weapons of mass destruction and transnational criminal organizations.

FY21 HSGP has been spent in support of building capabilities in the above priority areas across the following categories:



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- Planning
- Exercises
- Training
- Equipment
- Detection
- Intelligence

MDEM does not collect data on domestic terrorism. MDEM works closely with the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, Governor's Office of Homeland Security, and law enforcement partners to support all-hazards capacity and capability building in order to prevent, prepare for, plan for, respond to, and recover from events which may impact Marylanders.

3. Improving Emergency Management Performance Measures

MDEM should comment on the significant increase in funding received by the State from federal emergency management grants in recent years and how the agency has utilized or monitored the use of those funds to improve security and disaster preparedness in Maryland. (DLS Analysis, pg. 10)

The increase in federal emergency management grants can be attributed to recent disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and changes in the federal pre-disaster mitigation funding programs. MDEM has used management costs allowable under federal guidance to fund grant monitoring for these funding programs. MDEM has applied the funds to build improved all-hazard emergency management capabilities across the areas of planning, preparedness (including training and exercises), equipment, mitigation and recovery.

The department should comment on its success with respect to improving the hazard mitigation plans of jurisdictions and on any potential barriers to maintaining a 100% rate in future years. (DLS Analysis, pg. 11)

MDEM has prioritized support for local hazard mitigation planning by providing technical assistance to jurisdictions and working closely with local jurisdictions to apply for federal funding to complete hazard mitigation plans. While the responsibility for completing local hazard mitigation plans remains with each local government, potential barriers to MDEM's support of local hazard mitigation



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planning includes any reduction in federal funding support for both hazard mitigation planning and hazard mitigation management costs, which primarily funds the MDEM Hazard Mitigation Branch.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends the addition of committee narrative to require MDEM to develop more detailed Maryland 9-1-1 Board objectives and performance measures for the MFR section of the fiscal 2024 budget books and for subsequent fiscal years. (DLS Analysis, pg. 12)

MDEM acknowledges the DLS recommendation and will work with the 9-1-1 Board to update objectives and performance measures for the MFR section of fiscal 2024 budget books and for subsequent fiscal years.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

As such, the budget committees direct MDEM to develop more detailed agency objectives and performance measures for the MFR section of the fiscal 2024 budget books and for subsequent fiscal years. The budget committees also direct MDEM to submit a draft of the department's MFR submission not later than October 31, 2022. At a minimum, these measures should include:

- *all measurements submitted with the fiscal 2023 allowance;*
- *the ratio of grant monitors to grants from the federal emergency grant support provided to local jurisdictions;*
- *the ratio of grant monitors to grants from the State portion of the 9-1-1 telephone surcharge;*
- *the funds awarded to each jurisdiction from the State portion of the 9-1-1 telephone surcharge; and*
- *the total number of 9-1-1 calls from each jurisdiction using Public Safety Answering Points statistics. (DLS Analysis, pg. 13)*

MDEM acknowledges the recommended actions by DLS for MDEM to develop more detailed agency objectives and performance measures for the MFR section of the fiscal 2024 budget books and for subsequent fiscal years. MDEM acknowledges the recommended deadline of October 31, 2022 to submit draft agency objectives and performance measures to include at minimum the above outlined areas.