February 26, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am James Rovella, Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and I am joined today by our Chief Fiscal Officer Rosemarie Peshka. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today.

I would like to begin by saying that we fully support Governor Lamont’s recommended budget as outlined and are grateful for the resources provided to the department and the first responder community. Included in the Governor’s proposed budget, are funds for the outfitting of a large State Police Trooper Trainee Class which has a goal of adding 80 to 90 new Troopers to our force. As we continue to see the attrition of our State Police workforce, this class is a great start to replenishing our sworn personnel. We thank Governor Lamont for recognizing this need.

With regard to the proposed reductions, we will be able to absorb those reductions and provide essential public safety functions with the resources provided. Building upon the hard work of DESPP’s 6 divisions, am confident that we are positioned to make the very most of our assets by leveraging every opportunity to become more effective and efficient.

I am currently evaluating every aspect of the agency to identify areas of need as well as areas where cost savings could be achieved through initiatives such as civilianization and reorganizations of certain units.

Thank you and I will now answer any questions you may have.