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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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AND INSTITUTIONS

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MEMORANDUM

To: House Committee on Appropriations
From: House Committee on Corrections and Institutions
Date: February 26, 2025
Subject: Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Recommendations

The House Committee on Corrections and Institutions (Committee) has reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and supports the following proposals and recommendations:

1. Department of Corrections (DOC)

- B.1100(i) – The Committee supports appropriating \$200,000.00 from the General Fund to DOC to retain a consultant and develop an implementation plan to transition the Northeast Correctional Complex, which may include the Caledonia County Work Camp (Work Camp) to a treatment-focused facility for incarcerated Vermonters. However, such an appropriation is subject to DOC submitting a written report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee concerning the consultant’s findings and recommendations related to transitioning either the NECC or the Work Camp to a treatment-focused facility. The report shall be due on or before December 1, 2025 and contain the following:
 - a detailed transition plan;
 - expected outcomes and measures of success;
 - an assessment of how transitioning either the NECC or Work Camp to a treatment-focused facility aligns with best practices for residential treatment programs; and

- input from DOC’s current medical providers, including an analysis of how the program developed would impact any contract with the DOC’s third-party medical provider.¹
 - The Committee supports using \$1,060,000.00 from federal government earmarks to DOC in support of the provision of recovery coaching for incarcerated individual by Recovery Partners of Vermont at the State’s correctional facilities. Given the uncertainty of the availability of federal funds, on or before October 1, 2025, the Committee requests that the DOC report to the Joint Fiscal Committee on the status of the federal earmarks.
 - E.338(a) – The Committee supports appropriating \$152,000.00 from the PILOT Special Fund to DOC for supplemental facility payments to Newport and Springfield.
 - The Committee recommends appropriating not more than \$400,000.00 from the General Fund to DOC to support the provision of Lund’s Kids-A-Part program at the State’s correctional facilities.
 - The Committee recommends that DOC engage in formal project planning with the Agency of Digital Services to install Wi-Fi at Vermont’s correctional facilities, as recommended by the House Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.
2. Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs (DSAS)
- The Committee supports appropriating \$800,000.00 from the General Fund to DSAS to add six additional State Transport Deputies.
 - The Committee supports an additional appropriation of \$673,170.00 from the General Fund to eliminate the vacancy savings requirement of the \$673,170.00. A failure to eliminate the vacancy savings would require DSAS to hold open five or six of the current State Transport Deputies positions for the fiscal year.
 - The Committee supports the addition of these positions because they are responsible for transporting incarcerated individuals to court appearances and other judicial needs, which takes pressure off of DOC staff to facilitate remote arraignments for those individuals under the custody of the Commissioner.
3. Fund Transfers

¹ See Exhibit A for proposed language to include in Sec. B.1100(i) of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

- D.101(a)(1)(B) – The Committee supports transferring \$14,881,093.00 from the Capital Infrastructure Subaccount of the Cash Fund to the Capital and Essential Investments Fund, knowing that there will be further conversations with the House Committee on Appropriations as the budget is developed.
- D.101(a)(5)(B) – The Committee does not support transferring \$1,000,000.00 from the Capital Infrastructure Subaccount of the Cash Fund to the Capital and Essential Investments Fund. The Committee recommends that the monies are maintained in the Cash Fund for other uses.

4. Reserves

- D.103(a)(2)(B) – The Committee supports releasing \$14,500,000.00 from the Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves Subaccount of the Cash Fund for the purposes described in D.101(a)(5)(B).

5. Public Safety – Fire Safety

- E.212(a) – The Committee supports increasing the proposed grant amount by \$70,000.00 for a total of \$125,000.00 of the funds appropriated pursuant to Sec. B.212 to the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the purpose of designing dry fire hydrants because the cost of designing these dry fire hydrants has increased.