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New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

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Scott R. Mason
Executive Director

July 30, 2021

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
And the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a VI, authorize the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFGD), to accept and expend \$150,000 in federal funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) for the purpose of purchasing critical computer equipment required for a consolidation of Dispatch Services. The computer equipment being sought will enable Conservation Officers to better respond to the increase in recreational activities related to relaxed COVID-19 restrictions effective upon the approvals of the Fiscal Committee of the General Court and Governor and Executive Council through June 30, 2022. This is an allowable use of ARP FRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. **100% Federal Funds.**

Funds are to be budgeted in FY2022 in the following account:

03-75-75-751520-24XX0000¹ F&G (ARP) Computer Equipment

Class	Description	FY22 Requested Budget
020-500200	CURRENT EXPENSES	28,615
030-500311	EQUIPMENT NEW REPLACEMENT	121,235
041-500801	AUDIT FUND SET-ASIDE	150
	TOTAL EXPENSES	150,000
000-400338	FEDERAL FUNDS	150,000
	TOTAL REVENUE	150,000

¹All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH7502A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH7502Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

Funds are budgeted as follows:

Class 020 – Current Expenses – Data Plan for Laptops, Installation of Computer Mounts and Software.
Class 030 – Equipment – Computer Equipment (Laptops and patrol vehicle computer mounts).
Class 041 – Audit Fund Set-Aside-.001 of federal funds payable to DAS for audit fees

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EXPLANATION

The NHFGD is requesting to accept and expend funds from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the purpose of improving Dispatch services to provide increased safety to the public that is need due to a significant increase of tourists seeking to visit and recreate. This is especially true for people participating in recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, boating and Off Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) use that are patrolled by NHFGD.

Conservation Officers have the primary responsibility of enforcing all hunting, fishing and OHRV laws, while also having the full authority to enforce Motor Vehicle and Criminal Codes in the State of New Hampshire. Currently, there are only forty-four (44) Conservation Officers in New Hampshire, which includes those officers in training and assigned to administrative duties.

In an effort to consolidate Dispatch services for State Law Enforcement Agencies, the New Hampshire State Police has been tasked with providing Dispatch Services for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department on a full-time basis. Currently, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department provides Dispatch coverage Monday through Friday from 0800 hours to 1700 hours and the New Hampshire State Police provides Dispatch coverage outside of regular business hours and on the weekends.

During a recent meeting with Senior Leaders from the Governor's Office, New Hampshire Department of Safety, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the New Hampshire Department of Information Technology (DoIT) a consolidation of Dispatch services was proposed and discussed. As a result of this proposed consolidation of Dispatch services, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department conducted an internal review of the equipment required to access the new State Police CAD/Records Management System (RMS) and determined that more than half of the Conservation Officers in the State did not have the computer equipment required for a successful consolidation of Dispatch Services. Without new ruggedized laptops with internal air cards, patrol vehicle computer mounts and fixed antennas, the transition to a consolidated Dispatch and use of the new CAD/RMS would be significantly hindered.

As of today, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Law Enforcement Division has acquired:

- 18 new Dell Ruggedized 5424 Laptops and 12 patrol vehicle mounts for 44 officers assigned throughout the State.
- Director Michael O'Neil (Director of the Department of Information and Technology-DoIT) has stated that DOIT would be able to purchase 1 additional Dell Ruggedized 5424 Laptop and 1 patrol vehicle computer mount through existing funds budgeted for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.
- Provided that DoIT assists with these equipment purchases, the Law Enforcement Division would need a minimum of an additional 25 Dell Ruggedized 5424 Laptops and 31 patrol vehicle computer mounts.
- Computer mounts with charging capabilities and antenna's would also need to be installed in 31 patrol vehicles. This installation would need to occur in at least 20 existing patrol vehicles and 11 recently purchased patrol vehicles (these vehicles are anticipated to be delivered within the next 5-7 months).

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Please see the table below for specific project costs.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Computation</u>	<u>Federal</u>
Dell 5424 Laptop	\$3,070.00 per laptop x 25 = \$76,750.00	\$76,750.00
Patrol Vehicle Laptop Mount / Equipment	\$ 1,435.00 per mount x 31 = \$44,485.00	\$44,485.00
Computer Mount Installation	\$125.00 per vehicle x 31 = \$3,875.00	\$3,875.00
Installation Supplies	\$30.00 x 31 patrol vehicles = \$930.00	\$930.00
Software Programs & Programming	\$2,695.00	\$2,695.00
Internal Air Cards (Data Plan)	\$1,759.56 per month x 12 months = \$21,115 (approx.)	\$21,115.00
Audit Cost	\$150,000.00 x .001 = \$150.00	\$150.00
Total Cost		\$150,000.00

Since the relaxed COVID-19 restrictions were implemented, the State of New Hampshire has experienced a significant increase of tourists seeking to visit and recreate. This is especially true for people participating in recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, boating and Off Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) use. The increase in recreational activities has been documented through the increase in hunting/fishing licenses, Hike Safe Cards, boater registrations and OHRV registrations. Please review the table below for further information:

<u>License/Registration</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Overall Increase</u>
Fishing/Hunting	298,185	347,110	48,925 (16.7 %)
OHRV/Snowmobile	79,460	93,109	13,649 (17.2%)
Hike Safe Card	6,159	7,752	1,593 (25.7%)
Boat Registrations	96,006	101,279	5,273 (5.5%)
<u>Calls for Service</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Overall Increase</u>
	14,191	16,044	1,853 (13.0%)

With the increase of outdoor recreational activities throughout the State, Conservation Officers have an increased need to have immediate real time access to registration records, which are currently maintained by the New Hampshire Department of Safety and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. Up until recently, this remote access was not available. Through the inclusion of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department into the newly created New Hampshire State Police CAD/RMS system, Conservation Officers now have remote access to information that was not available previously. Coupled with the newly created Spyglass application, Conservation Officers now have the ability to access New Hampshire Fish and Game Department data to ensure appropriate action can be taken when addressing possible violations of an administrative rule or Revised Statute Annotated (RSA). Obtaining new ruggedized laptops that are portable, while having the ability to also mount in a patrol vehicle will provide Conservation Officer's instantaneous access to information relative to a subject or subjects that they encounter in the field.

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Due to relaxed COVID-19 rules and restrictions and increased post-pandemic demand for travel, hospitality, tourism, and other services, it is expected that the State will see a heavy influx of resident and tourist activity. Although this is a very welcome change, it also poses a challenge to state agencies and municipalities in managing large groups of people and dealing with increases in tourist and other activities that may lead to unrest or other security challenges.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott R. Mason", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott R. Mason
Executive Director