



## Office of the Commissioner

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April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dear Chair Lee and Members of Capital Investment Committee,

The Department of Public Safety works to serve all communities and build a safer Minnesota. The critical investments included in the Governor's and Lt. Governor's Capital Bonding request come from listening to the needs of Minnesotans and responding with solutions. I am grateful for the important funding included in HF5220, and I want to thank Chair Lee, Members of the committee and the staff for your work.

I am grateful for the inclusion of a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) regional office and forensic laboratory in Mankato, which will serve all of southern Minnesota. The legislature approved funding to design and purchase land for this new laboratory in May 2023. The land has been purchased and the final design is currently in process. Investing in this regional facility is crucial to meeting the needs of our local law enforcement partners with the shift in crime trends and the exponential increase in forensic testing of evidence.

This investment will allow the BCA to meet the increased demands and decrease the turnaround times for forensic testing. Evidence submissions for DNA analysis have increased 200% in the last decade. Controlled substance submissions have nearly doubled over the last five years, and digital media evidence analysis increased by 122% between 2017 and 2021. This investment will also allow BCA to provide specialized investigative services and analysis of digital evidence to assist local agencies in the southern half of the state in areas such as internet crimes against children, human trafficking, opioid and other drug crimes, sexual assaults and other violent crimes.

For these same public safety considerations, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the department's requests to fund both the design and land acquisition to expand the BCA's current northern regional facility and laboratory in Bemidji as well as the land acquisition and design of a new State Patrol headquarters. While these projects were not included in the bill before us today, they remain important elements of the Department's work to advance statewide public safety and deserve consideration for inclusion in a final bill.

The Bemidji facility has proven to be a deeply valuable asset to our law enforcement partners in the northern half of Minnesota, but it desperately needs to be expanded to provide the same critical investigative services and forensic testing to meet the increased demands. This project has the support of local law enforcement, county attorneys, and several members of the statewide Crime Victim Services Coalition.

- Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement
- Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
- Driver and Vehicle Services
- Emergency Communication Networks
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Minnesota State Patrol
- Office of Communications
- Office of Justice Programs
- Office of Pipeline Safety
- Office of Traffic Safety
- State Fire Marshal

Similarly, a centralized State Patrol facility combining six separate spaces into one facility will allow synergy between leadership, command, and teams. This improves efficiency and accountability. Currently the Minnesota State Patrol does not have adequate training space to fulfill needs into the future or space and storage for readiness response. A new centralized location would modernize the way State Patrol conducts day to day business.

We look forward to continuing to work with the bill author, committee members, and staff on these public safety capital investment needs. Thank you for your support of public safety and critical investments to move our mission forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Jacobson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "B" and "J".

Commissioner Jacobson  
Minnesota Department of Public Safety