



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 5, 2011

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #474

Parks Public Safety and Law Enforcement Equipment (DNR -- Fish, Wildlife, and Recreation)

[LFB 2011-13 Budget Summary: Page 309, #3]

CURRENT LAW

Under section 27.01(13) of the statutes, DNR is required to provide general police supervision over all state parks. Parks law enforcement personnel utilize numerous types of equipment for daily operations within parks properties, including vehicles, radio and communication equipment, and firearms.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$125,000 in 2011-12 and \$109,500 beginning in 2012-13 from the parks account of the conservation fund for parks law enforcement equipment upgrades.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The bill would provide \$15,500 in 2011-12 to purchase vehicle security screens for 27 parks law enforcement vehicles throughout the state. Parks law enforcement personnel are responsible for providing police supervision in state parks and transferring offenders to local detention facilities. The security screens separate persons in custody being transferred to a detention facility from parks law enforcement personnel. The bill also provides \$7,000 annually to transition permanent and LTE parks staff with law enforcement-related duties to the use of lead-free ammunition.

2. In addition, the bill would provide annual funding of \$102,500 for the first two years of a four-year master lease. This includes \$58,300 annually to purchase 99 portable (hand-held)

radios and \$44,200 annually to purchase 37 mobile data computer units (MDC), IP Mobile-Net radios (which enable the MDCs to transmit data to Wisconsin State Patrol dispatchers), and associated equipment for use in parks authorized emergency vehicles. The 99 portable radios purchased would be P25- compliant narrow-band radios, which the Federal Communications Commission has mandated government communications must be by 2013 and would be compatible with both analog and digital transmissions. The 37 MDC units would replace 31 existing units in authorized emergency vehicles. The current units are over five years old, and are experiencing increasing maintenance issues. The bill would provide for an additional six units which would also be installed in authorized emergency vehicles. Parks staff indicate that 23 of the 99 radios would be for southern forests staff and 76 for parks staff. In addition, eight of the 37 MDC units would be for southern forests authorized emergency vehicles (the remaining 29 for parks). Therefore, the funding provided under the bill should be provided from both the parks account and forestry account of the conservation fund (Alternative 1).

3. The bill provides funding for these master-lease payments on an ongoing basis. As ongoing funding the amount will increase base-level funding on a permanent basis. Therefore, the funding will continue after the expiration of the four-year master lease unless removed in the 2015-17 budget. However, in the past, funding for master lease payments has often been provided on a one-time basis. One-time funding is removed from the base each biennium as a standard budget adjustment. This would place the responsibility on DNR to request funding for the final two years in the 2013-15 biennium, rather than requiring the administration (or Legislature) to track master leases over their duration and then delete funding after their completion (Alternative 2). Further, this would allow the item to be considered with overall parks account expenditure levels and the condition of the parks account next biennium.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation as modified to provide \$125,000 SEG (including \$101,900 parks account SEG and \$23,100 forestry account SEG) in 2011-12 and \$109,500 SEG beginning in 2012-13 (including \$86,400 parks account SEG and \$23,100 forestry account SEG) for parks equipment upgrades.

2. Adopt the Governor's recommendation as modified. However, specify that the \$102,500 SEG for the first two-years of a four-year master lease, be one-time. (DNR would need to request funding in the 2013-15 biennium for the remaining two master lease payments.)

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