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Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
General Bonding Subcommittee

Connecticut Military Department

Major General Francis J. Evon, Jr.
The Adjutant General

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Good afternoon Co-Chairpersons, Senator Fonfara and Representative Scanlon, and members of the General Bonding Subcommittee. I am Major General Francis J. Evon, Jr., the Adjutant General of the Connecticut Military Department. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the department's budget. However, I will first provide you with some brief information on the state of your military.

Your Connecticut National Guard has experienced an extraordinary year in terms of domestic operations. As we are all painfully aware, the COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented demand for military support to the state's response efforts. To date, over 1,000 members of the Connecticut National Guard and organized militia have conducted a wide variety of COVID-19 support missions and continue to do so today. From managing medical and personal protective equipment logistics, to nursing home safety inspections, to support of COVID-19 testing and now vaccination sites, our Airmen and Soldiers have selflessly answered the call to duty in their local communities. Their performance has been and continues to be outstanding.

At the same time, the National Guard provided relief efforts in the wake of Tropical Storm Isaias and support to the 2020 elections and presidential inauguration. The department's newly developed Cyber Response Team provided cyber security support to the City of Hartford and Secretary of State. Meanwhile, 300 additional Guardsmen and women deployed to Washington D.C. and the State Capitol to conduct inaugural security operations. All the while, our total force continued to conduct regular training in order to maintain readiness for our federal mission. Our Soldiers and Airmen performed admirably in following force health protection guidance, while also conducting required training in support of upcoming deployments. Currently, the Connecticut National Guard has about 700 members deployed. 600 of which are Soldiers of the storied 1-102nd Infantry Regiment who are in route to eastern Africa to conduct stabilization and peacekeeping missions. This is the battalion's third deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom since September 11, 2001. The citizens of Connecticut can rest easy at night knowing the Connecticut National Guard has and will continue to live up to its motto, "Always Ready, Always There."

As you are aware, the Military Department operates from a significant number of facilities and sites spread across the state. Our portfolio includes 14 Readiness and Reserve Centers, 4 Maintenance Shops, 4 Specialty Sites, 3 Training Centers, 2 Militia Sites, 2 Army Aviation facilities, an Air Guard Base, and an Air Guard Station. We now maintain a presence in 35 locations across the state. This includes 200 buildings accounting for approximately 2.3 million square feet of space. Over the last decade our construction, renovation, acquisition and divestiture programs have made significant strides toward our continuous goal of providing our Guardsmen with superior facilities from which to train, operate, and support our state in times of emergencies. Details of our construction program are provided to the legislature annually in our Armory Construction Purchase Program Report.

For more than two decades, Connecticut's military facility modernization and recapitalization program has remained a good news story. I'm happy to report we have one of the top facility programs in the nation that benefits not only Soldiers and Airmen but the state as well by providing modern, state of the art facilities and hundreds of construction and trades jobs right here in Connecticut. From recent project completions to those programmed to break ground in the future, the Military Department will execute about \$45M more in federal military construction over the next two fiscal years. Our ability to execute this level of Federal funding hinges almost entirely on the ability of the State to meet its statutorily required matching funds. Through the continued support of this committee and the State Bonding Commission, the Department has been able to effectively leverage its substantial military construction and sustainment funding.

I'd like to highlight some recent accomplishments funded with Federal sustainment dollars. With the completion of a multi-year, \$3.8 million dollar renovations to the Enfield Armory, our Soldiers can accomplish their Federal and State missions increasing their readiness and response times. Additionally we have executed over \$3.6 million dollars of energy efficiency, sustainment and security projects state wide. This includes a federally funded comprehensive statewide energy, water and utility plan which will enable us to compete for federally funded energy security and sustainability projects. We have been successful in leveraging state bond funds recently allocated to secure additional federal funding for building envelope and energy projects to continue our efforts to meet the goals laid out in the Governor's executive order. These projects will increase capabilities vital to our training requirements and domestic assistance response. Lastly, we are on the third phase of renovations to our transient barracks HVAC systems at Camp Nett in Niantic totaling over \$4 million dollars in federal funding. However, we are not content with these successes, and are continually competing nationally for future larger scale projects through the Federal MILCON (Military Construction) process.

Nationally, MILCON funding for the Army Guard shows a slight increase in funding levels in the upcoming 5 year cycle. We have capitalized on this and secured a project in the Future Year Defense Program for a \$17.5 million dollar new Readiness Center in Putnam in FY 22. The key to future success beyond this lies in our ability to submit relevant, competitive projects to Congress that nest with the national facility improvement and modernization strategies. The State of Connecticut's requirement in this procedure is matching bond funds and providing buildable property.

As one example, as detailed in our Armory Construction Purchase Project Report, approximately \$2 million of new State bonding authorization at the Stone's Ranch Military Reservation will open the way for \$50-60 million dollars of Federal construction funds in the future. As another example, acquiring buildable property in close proximity to Litchfield County will allow us to be among the top states in the nation to compete for the next Readiness Center project. Our TASMG in Groton has expanded its function beyond what its current boundaries can handle and we have submitted projects that will require property to secure the federally funded construction. We continue to work with DAS and OPM on these endeavors.

This year, the Air Guard successfully completed their 2016 C-130H Conversion Installation Development Plan. We continue to make great progress securing funding and upgrading our facilities at the Bradley Air National Guard Base. In the last 12 months we've completed the C-130H conversion program with the \$8.5M Entry Control Facility, which has both enhanced the security of the installation and created an impressive sight for the Connecticut Air National Guard. In addition, we completed the \$5.5M Addition and Alteration of our Security Forces Squadron building. This year, we will award a contract for the demolition of Building 11, a former F-100 Alert facility positioned on our aircraft parking apron. This project will eradicate a major airfield obstruction and eliminate the need for a federal waiver from the Air National Guard. Finally, the Connecticut Air National Guard has begun the design on a \$17M Aerospace Support Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance Repair Composite Facility. This project will be 100% designed in May 2021 and ready for construction funding.

As our Guardsmen and their units continue to support the needs of the nation, we continue to view the federal capital funding environment as one still filled with opportunity. Improving the facilities from which Soldiers and Airmen train and operate is key to sustaining member and unit readiness. Readiness equates to greater mission success and the ability to better control our own destiny. Our commitment is to provide the best for our Connecticut National Guard so they can continue to effectively respond to any state or federal mission.

Thank you all for this opportunity to appear before you today. I stand ready to address your questions.