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BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

*GOVERNOR'S RECEPTION ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, STATE HOUSE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND*

September 11, 2024
10:06 a.m.

PRESENT

HONORABLE WES MOORE

Governor

HONORABLE BROOKE E. LIERMAN

Comptroller

HONORABLE DERECK E. DAVIS

Treasurer

JOHN GONTRUM

Secretary, Board of Public Works

ATIF CHAUDHRY

Secretary, Department of General Services

THOMAS HICKEY

Director of Procurement and Real Property Initiatives,
University System of Maryland

EMILY WILSON

Director of Legislative and Constituent Services,
Department of Natural Resources

VALERIE RADOMSKY

Chief Procurement Officer, Department of Transportation

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PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNOR MOORE: Good morning and welcome to today's BPW meeting. And before we start off with the business of the day, I just want to take a quick moment in both remembrance and acknowledgment of today being 9/11 and Patriots' Day. Where we saw that 23 years ago, we had a day that changed not just the fabric of this country but the fabric of the globe. And people who -- not just the people who we lost that day in remembrance of them and their family members, and the people who died not just tragically, but needlessly.

It's also an acknowledgment of the response of the people who stepped up and served. The people who were there to support first responders, the people who signed up to put on the uniform of this country, the people who signed up to become teachers and nurses, the people who took on responsibilities for their families that they did not anticipate. That the honoring of today and this being Patriots' Day is meaningful because I think we saw that the definition of patriot was not just expanded, but it was truly hardened in the moments after the horrific attacks of September 11th, 2001.

And so I just wanted to be able to start the meeting, just taking a quick moment of silence to both remember those we lost and to also remember the service and the sacrifice of those who were moved to service by the inspiring acts that we saw that morning to protect our fellow Americans and fellow citizens.

(Pause.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you. And may they rest in eternal peace. We'll go on with the with the business of the day.

Mr. Secretary, good morning and thank you so much. Good to see you.

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MR. GONTRUM: Good morning, Governor. Good to see you.

And good to see you, Madam Comptroller and Mr. Treasurer. There are 16 items and one report of an emergency procurement on the agenda this morning.

However, at the request of the Department of Housing and Community Development, I'm withdrawing Item 6. And at the request of Maryland Environmental Service, I am withdrawing Item 13. Leaving 14 items on the agenda this morning along with the one Emergency Procurement report. I am happy to assist with answering any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much. Is there any discussion on the Secretary's Agenda?

TREASURER DAVIS: I do, sir. Item 16, University of Maryland, College Park.

MR. GONTRUM: Item 16 is a proposed settlement from the University of Maryland, College Park. Mr. Treasurer, in the matter of John Doe v. the University of Maryland, College Park, we have Mr. Ariel Lichterman from the Attorney General's Office.

TREASURER DAVIS: Hi. My question is more -- just in reading the case, it relates to, I guess, the third-party who was representing the State. Can you go back and explain to me what was that third party's role in this?

MR. LITCHTERMAN: Sure. Good morning, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. Just for the record, my name is Ariel Lichterman, Assistant Attorney General on behalf of University of Maryland, College Park. So just to clarify, the lawsuit arose out of a student disciplinary proceeding at the University. There were allegations involving sexual misconduct involving a student at the University. Among the defendants in the case was -- I believe you're referring to -- among the defendants was the University itself, as well as the Title IX coordinator for the University, and the hearing officer that was

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involved in this -- in the student disciplinary matter. I believe the third-party that you're referring to is the individual who initially brought the complaint and the allegation.

TREASURER DAVIS: The third-party I'm referring to, I think would be the hearing officer. Didn't we contract -- didn't the University contract with a third-party to, I guess, mediate all of this?

MR. LICHTERMAN: Yes, sir, that's correct. The hearing officer was a third-party contractor on behalf of the University who served in that role to hear the student disciplinary matter.

TREASURER DAVIS: And now, the incident itself isn't really before us. Essentially now, we're being asked to pay a settlement because of some sort of mistakes that was made by that third-party. So my question is why are we paying for someone that we hired a contractor to do it? Why isn't this their bill?

MR. LICHTERMAN: The hearing officer is represented by not our office, but has her own counsel in the case. The settlement that we are putting before the Board today involves the whole student disciplinary matter. And we believe for the reasons we sort of set forth in the memorandum we submitted, we believe there is exposure for the State here. And we believe that the settlement itself is in the best interest of the State. Not simply on behalf --

TREASURER DAVIS: But what I'm --

MR. LICHTERMAN: -- of --

TREASURER DAVIS: What I'm saying is that -- I mean settlement is fine, but we contracted with this. This wasn't done by State employees or anything like that. We hired somebody to handle this for us, and it appears they were negligent in some way in their handling of this matter. So we might have -- we might as well have done it ourselves, if we're going to end up

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paying for mistakes anyway.

I'm assuming we went with outside mediators or a hearing officer because they had a certain level of expertise. So we were effectively contracting that out. And if they made mistakes in the performance of their duties as the vendor, the contractor, or whatever we want to call them, they should be paying for their mistakes, not us. Because if we're going to pay for their mistakes, then we might as well have done it ourselves.

MR. LICHTERMAN: One of the allegations -- I guess among the allegations in the case were challenges to University's processes. And so I think one of the challenges, as you bring up, was the hearing officer's conduct. But also the University's processes and procedures. And so again, without getting into the specific details, we believe there is some exposure in the case. And as a result, we think it's in the best interest of the State to proceed with resolving this matter.

TREASURER DAVIS: Okay.

MR. LICHTERMAN: Are there any other questions that I can answer for anybody?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Sorry. Can I just clarify what you just said? So you're saying that there were several -- there were several types of exposure. One was potentially against the third-party mediator, as the Treasurer noted. And there was -- there were then other counts that would have been against the University for its procedures. And I assume then there's -- the University is looking into its procedures to make changes?

MR. LICHTERMAN: So there weren't separate counts. But within the same counts, there were challenges both to the conduct of the hearing officer as well as to the University's processes. With respect to the University's -- looking into to its procedures, I'd be happy to refer to -- we have a representative from the University here who can address any specific questions related to the

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University's policies.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: And can I ask a follow-up too? Is there -- and that's fine. I'm happy to talk to the University afterwards. When there are matters like this, where we as a State are contracting with a third-party to administer a hearing in this case or -- I'm curious, like, what our rights are or are there standard agreements that are signed between USM and that third-party administrator that would allow us to sue them to make up for what we're paying, right, to be held -- like indemnification, basically, or are we holding them harmless for mistakes that are made -- that they make? Not mistakes, but like negligence or even -- especially intentional behavior. Do you have any idea?

MR. LICHTERMAN: I'm not so familiar with the exact terms of this specific agreement between the University and the hearing officer in this case, as to that.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yeah. I mean that would be, I think, maybe worth a follow up for us to understand the kinds of agreements that the University System is signing. Since it is, at the end of the day, on us and the taxpayers to make sure that they are holding their third-party hearing officers accountable for the work that they do, when they are negligent or heaven forbid make intentional -- or even intentional issues. So thanks.

MR. LICHTERMAN: Thank you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Good point, Mr. Treasurer.

TREASURER DAVIS: Thanks.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Any other discussion on the Secretary's Agenda? Okay. May I have a motion to approve the agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

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GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

We'll proceed with the Department of Natural Resources Agenda.

Ms. Wilson, good morning.

MS. WILSON: Good morning, Governor, Mr. Treasurer, Madam Comptroller. Emily Wilson with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. We have 23 items on our DNR Real Property Agenda today for your consideration. And I'm happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Wonderful. Thank you so much.

I would like to first start off with calling up Item 20A, which is a request from the Department to utilize \$9.6 million in Program Open Space State share funds for the acquisition of a 42-acre property within the Savage River State Park and the Savage River Lodge Complex.

The reason I wanted to call this up is because this acquisition not only ensures that this very significant parcel and piece of land that's located within Savage River State Forest will be protected under the supervision of the Maryland Park Service, but also will expand this opportunity for Maryland families to be able to experience it and enjoy this incredible complex, but also being able to do it at affordable rates.

And the projections estimate is that this property will generate over \$1 million in revenue for the State, which exceeds the anticipated expenses after the initial startup costs which are being offered to start up in part -- in support by our federal partners who have walked with during this journey. And so as this moves on, I would just take the opportunity to invite Marylanders to be able to enjoy this and the incredible amenities that it provides. I believe it's over 18 cabins, 8 yurts, a lodge, and also a multi-use trail system that's across the entire 42-acre property. And which will all become taxpayers' property after today's vote. So I just urge taxpayers to be able to go out and enjoy this unique treasure

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for our State.

And also, I just want to thank -- thank you, Ms. Wilson, thank Secretary Kurtz, thank the entire DNR team, and also all of our local and our State and our federal partners, and also our private partners too for this incredible work in helping to secure this deal.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to one speaker request for this item. And I'd like to recognize my friend Senator Mike McKay, who is signed up to speak in opposition.

Senator McKay, it is great seeing you as always, my friend.

SENATOR MCKAY: Great seeing you there, Governor.

Well, good morning, Governor. Good morning, Comptroller and Mr. Treasurer.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Morning.

SENATOR MCKAY: It is an awesome and wonderful day here in this great State of Maryland. While I have signed up as opposition, I would like to say that I'm not necessarily in opposition of the purchase of the property. I would like to pump their brakes a little bit. You see, in District 1 back in 1995, DNR purchased significant infrastructure called the Woodmont Rod & Gun Club only to find itself burdened with unplanned expenses.

In the Woodmont case, following the purchase, the DNR found numerous maintenance issues that needed to be addressed. And in response, the Agency pulled manpower, significant other resources available to its other projects, and redirected them to the Woodmont facility. But this is just one example of a mistake that I don't want to see repeated. You see the Woodmont property, the public does have access to that one day a year. One day a year. In this particular project, the Savage River Lodge I firmly believe never should have gotten into private hands and been built and those type of things. That happened

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30 years ago and the community that I represent still has some angst about it.

A year ago through the process of DNR doing exactly what they're supposed to do, they notified my office saying they were interested in the property. About that time, I did notify the DNR saying that I think it's important that we have public input. Not public input to the price, not public input towards the actual meats of the contract, but public input of what does DNR plan to do with the facility. We waited until the contract between the seller and DNR was inked, for lack of better words. and I asked again to have a public meeting, that was denied.

I know that it is not necessarily normal process that all DNR properties, when it's a land acquisition, have a public hearing beforehand, the Board of Public Works, but I tend to believe I think this is a special one. Why would we have notification of the Senator and the Delegate who represent that area, if not to ask questions? And so my questions are a lot. I've had the Forest Board. I've had numerous people approach my office. There's been some articles written. At the end of the day, the public has questions. And all I'm asking for is a delay to allow DNR to have a town hall.

That town hall may not have anybody show up. I do believe they'll probably be 25, maybe 50 people. But at the end of the day, good governance and transparency starts where we have public input. And I just ask for this grace, that you pump the brakes. The property is not going to be sold under the feet of the State of Maryland. And just to give the public the ability, the constituents that I serve, the ability to ask questions is all I'm asking for.

And unfortunately, in the Woodmont case, they are a little subject of what's going to happen. And I'll leave you with this. A coin has three sides. I believe what's being presented to you right now, you have two sides of this coin. The third side of the coin is the reared edge. All I'm asking for is the ability for

the public to be part of that reared edge to give you all the information that, in all honesty, may be a great asset. And like a balance sheet, I see both debits and credits for this piece of property.

And I think at the end of the day, when DNR really explains to the public what they plan to do with it, I think we'll have public support for it. So I just ask you to consider delaying until we can have this meeting. And my office will be glad to assist you in having that meeting, and we can have that -- I would say we could have it in less than 30 days. That shouldn't be a problem for us to do that. And we can have this brought back to the Board of Public Works lickety-split.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much, Senator.

SENATOR MCKAY: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Ms. Wilson, I'd like to invite you for comments as well.

MS. WILSON: Thank you.

I certainly do appreciate the Senator's time and his comments for making the trip down here today to speak on this. I will say that this is a real estate negotiation. We are still in under a contract. We typically do not have public input on contract negotiations. We risk contract interference if we do do that. However, we are very open and very happy to host public input and an open house on this acquisition once we do receive BPW approval, but we must respect the contract negotiations at this standpoint.

We did notify, as the Senator mentioned, the local delegation per statutory requirement. That occurred in November of 2023. And then also per statutory requirement, we notified the budget committees of this in July of this

year well in advance of both the 40- and the 45-day, respectively, timelines before the Board of Public Works. So I would respectfully request we continue with this transaction.

As I said, I think when the public comes out and sees it and has a chance to talk with us -- we have not made concrete decisions on how this whole property is going to be managed. But I do know that our Park Service took into account a business analysis. That's why we know that we can project about \$1 million worth of revenue ongoing, again, once initial costs are taken into account. And the property itself is entirely within Savage River State Forest. I mean, it's completely surrounded. It is the donut hole. It has cabins, it has yurts, and it has a lodge. And as you said, a multi-use trail system.

There's nothing drastically different that the Department would plan to do with this property. Cabin camping is right in our wheelhouse, so that's exactly what we intend on continuing to do with this property. And as you mentioned, now this property is going to be open for the public's use and can be made available at more affordable rates than from when it was in private hands. And we're very much looking forward to the Park Service taking this under their wing and managing it as a Maryland State Park.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you, Ms. Wilson. Thank you.

Madam Comptroller?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

So I appreciate you responding to Senator McKay and I think we all believe in transparency. And certainly as a former State delegate, and I'm sure the Treasurer feels the same, it is very important that we are responsive to our constituents and be the go-between between our State agencies and our constituents. And so do appreciate that you have committed to meeting with Senator McKay and his delegates and his constituents to go forward and to talk

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about the plans because I do think it is in a really special place and a really exciting project, but as you said, there will be more details to be worked out. But all that has to happen after sort of the contract negotiations. So I appreciate that.

I don't have any other questions for Emily right now, though. I don't know if --

TREASURER DAVIS: Yes, let me start here. The appraisals, the most recent one we had was December 17th of 2023 for 6.8 million. The one before that was about a month earlier on November 20th, 2023, for 9.8 million. So how did we settle? So it seems that we're splitting the difference. That's a \$3 million difference. If we split the difference, it's 1.5 million which would mean the purchase price probably should have been 7.3. How did we end up all the way at 8.7, when the most recent price was significantly lower?

MS. WILSON: I will say that appraisals -- we see this all the time. We come in with disparate values. Appraising is an art and it is not a science. And we negotiate for land acquisitions. In fact, that term is actually in the statute that we shall negotiate real property. And it's just a back-and-forth negotiation between private landowners and the State.

And we always look to try to get the best value. We are \$1.1 million below the high appraised value. And I think if you look at our other acquisitions, not only on this agenda, but on many agendas from years past, you'll see that there's a difference oftentimes between appraised values and that we always look to get the best price that we possibly can for the citizens of Maryland.

TREASURER DAVIS: Let me continue. What do you mean by contract interference?

MS. WILSON: Well, we're in a contract stage right now. We have a contract to purchase a piece of property with a private landowner. We've negotiated terms of that contract. I would say it's probably not dissimilar to

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perhaps going through a procurement and an outside party coming in in the middle of a procurement.

TREASURER DAVIS: Let me stay sort of there. You mentioned that after BPW approval, then you're willing to have the community meeting. Isn't that sort of like buying a car and then test driving it? I mean, what's the point of having that meeting, if we've already made the purchase? See, I guess I look at it this way and I'm sure if the Governor or the Lieutenant Governor and so forth, if they had questions about this, the Department probably wouldn't have said, "We're in the middle of contract negotiations, Governor. We can't explain to you what we're doing." And the reason why you wouldn't say that is because he's your boss.

Well, for Senator McKay, those constituents are his bosses. For me, Senator McKay is my boss and other members of the General Assembly. He can't really look at this like it's a private corporation because it's public and private. Those are just always bad comparisons how they operate a business versus the government -- a community, and I've seen it. And I think the Governor and the Comptroller will agree. We're at sort of a different years in terms of -- in government, but whether you've been in it two, ten, or thirty, we all know that we work for the public and they have to be comfortable.

I've seen it with land use decisions more so than anything else. With land use decisions, they are uncomfortable. They are concerned about what they don't know. You know those woods in the backyard that they thought would be there forever and now, you see a sign coming that says it's going to be a little bit different. And what I've learned in 30 years of this is when you let them know up front what's going on, what's happening in their community and their backyards and so forth, you head off a lot of problems. And like I said, in and of itself, I don't have a problem with this. But just as with Senator Benson just a

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couple of weeks ago, I understand when you have constituent concerns. Constituents calling you, knocking on your door saying what's going on, and they're in a full panic.

And I just don't understand why we can't sit down with them. If we're going to do -- I think basically you said we're going to keep doing what we've been doing with the cabins. I don't know why we just can't have that meeting and go, "We're going to continue doing what we've been doing. These are the benefits to you." I think as the Senator mentioned, they're not chiming in about, "Well no, I think that costs too much or we need to lower the price." I highly doubt they're going to ask about that.

They just want to know what's going on in and around the community, around their home. And I think we could put their mind at ease, if they could just hear that. So I think that's my concern. I think that's probably the Senator's concern. He indicated that he wasn't necessarily opposed to it. And I'm in the same posture, but he's got people that he has to answer to that that's the reason why they elected him. That's the reason why they elected me and the Governor and the Comptroller to make sure that they get these answers. And if they can't get it from us, then they don't need us.

MS. WILSON: I totally understand and totally respect that. As I said, we are committed. The property itself is important enough to us because of its location and the amenities that it provides. We also have -- I also have Paul Peditto here, who is our Assistant Secretary for land resources, who can perhaps add some additional information about what our plans would be for the property and for the public input portion of that.

Paul, you on?

MR. PEDITTO: Yep.

MS. WILSON: Okay. Go ahead, Paul.

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MR. PEDITTO: Very good. Thank you, Emily. Thank you, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. Paul Peditto, for the record. I'm the Assistant Secretary for Land Resources at DNR. So arguably, I'm the chief ranger for our public lands. I regret I can't be there today. I'm actually in District 1 heading to a meeting with some of the senators, stakeholders, citizens -- shortly after we leave here.

I'll just offer -- as a 30-year career land manager for DNR, I can tell you that I've seen a lot of places before we've bought them, after we've purchased them, and many years later. And I don't think I've seen a place that is in better plug-and-play condition than this facility. There's almost no deferred maintenance. It's in really remarkable shape to do as the Governor said, sort of provide an opportunity that doesn't exist today for many Marylanders. And our parks are already oversubscribed and in many cases, particularly our Western Maryland parks that are growing in popularity. So this will fill an important gap for us.

Mr. Treasurer, to your to your comments. And as Emily said, I respect that as well. I will tell you I spoke with the Senator directly. Our concern was that there were questions about price and term. And that is just something -- we can't have a public adjudication of the terms of a contract. For no other reason than to respect the fact that many private landowners would probably foreclose conversations with us going forward if they knew their neighbors were going to be part of that dialogue before we got approval from the Board of Public Works.

So we're trying to thread that needle, but I am absolutely committed to hosting a meeting and helping the community become informed on our plans and getting their fingerprints on that process and our plans going forward.

TREASURER DAVIS: So what we're saying is that we really

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believe that in such a meeting, the community would raise the price -- or raise the issue of price. And even if they did, that we would think they would be a factor. I mean we couldn't just say, "That's not on the table. We can't discuss that. Next question."

MR. PEDITTO: Again, I guess we're happy to revisit sort of our process, but we can't tell the public what they're not allowed to ask. And I had very good --

TREASURER DAVIS: You can say you're not allowed to answer.

MR. PEDITTO: What we were going to pay for it, what were our intended uses, and getting out in front of that, it's just something we've never done before. Again, I guess we're happy to revisit it. But we try really hard to respect those private landowner sort of rights to confidentiality as they are talking to us as a buyer.

TREASURER DAVIS: But again, sir, with all due respect, we cannot approach this like we are a private business. This is not DNR's money. This is not BPW's money. This is the People's money. So they have a right to know. Heck, we already know the number right here. I already said it. So it's already in the public sphere. How much money we're talking. That cannot be a precluding thing. "Well, we can't meet." No, this is not some Fortune 500 companies doing a big business deal. This is the people's money.

They have a right to know this information. And the answer of "Well, we've never done this before," I've heard that for a lot of things. And we don't -- my position has always been we don't keep doing what we're doing because we've always done it that way. So yeah, I think we do constantly need to look at our processes and see if they need to be updated, or amended, or changed, or whatever the case may be. Not just sort of blindly follow what we've always done, especially once it starts to become an issue. And in this case, it is an issue

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for some.

MR. PEDITTO: Understood.

TREASURER DAVIS: I'm good, Governor.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Can I ask a question?

I think we have between 15 and 19 Program Open Space and Rural Legacy allocations in this agenda; is that correct, Emily?

MS. WILSON: Yes.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: And we have about that number in almost -- I mean, we have Program Open Space agenda items in nearly every agenda, correct. And so you do -- you are following -- you're trying to follow the same statutory process here that you followed for every other Program Open Space process?

MS. WILSON: Absolutely.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: And I also just wanted to note that I do -- I'm very glad you're going to do a public meeting, but I also think a public meeting is not even enough, right? When we have State spaces, it's not one-and-done with public input, right? I certainly have visited State parks and sent my public input about the condition of the bathrooms or the road that has potholes in. And so you as DNR are constantly receiving public input about your facilities; isn't that correct?

MS. WILSON: For sure.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yeah. So while I think a public meeting spearheaded by the Delegation and Senator McKay is important, you will continue to respond to public input and public feedback both about Savage River Lodge, about New Germany State Park, which it will be a part of, is my understanding, and other facilities always and going forward, correct?

MS. WILSON: Yes, ma'am.

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COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Okay. Thanks. I just wanted to verify that we are never one-and-done with public input in the State of Maryland. We always want to hear more public input about our State facilities.

And so I don't have any other questions, but I do want to make a comment there. You guys can sit down, I think.

GOVERNOR MOORE: No other comments for Ms. Wilson?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Do you have any other comments?

MS. WILSON: I have no further comments.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Sorry. Go ahead.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is your comment on this issue or another issue?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: On this issue.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Perfect.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thanks, Ms. Wilson.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thanks. I just wanted to say I have had the pleasure of visiting Savage River Lodge with my family and it is a truly phenomenal property. And I am so excited that that property will be made more available to Marylanders. If you go online during the peak of the summer heat, you will find every campsite reserved and State parks completely full across the state of Maryland, which means that there is no public space, no big beautiful tree-lined parks for people to escape to in the heat of the summer.

And so to me, this property and this purchase is so exciting because we're both completing the donut hole of Savage River Lodge -- of Savage River Forest, but also because we are opening up additional space to Marylanders for eternity, and to a really special place that previously might have been out of

their price range or might have not been accessible because it's full. Most of you know, it's often full and booked. And so I just -- in addition to that, the purchase will ensure this special property is available to Marylanders, that Savage River Forest is made whole under the State's watchful eye, and that we are bringing in ongoing revenue for years to come that will help make sure that we can maintain not only this property, but other properties across the park system as well.

And so I think it is incredibly important to continue taking public feedback on a property like this and on all of our State parks. But I'm also really excited that we are fulfilling the dream of Program Open Space, which was this, which was to create work with private landowners and claw back land so that we could make it open for the public. And so for that reason, I will be supporting this today.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you. And so I think -- I think, Mr. Secretary, what we'll do is I want to separate Item 20. And because I know we'll have a -- I will also be supporting and I know we're having -- the Treasurer is going to abstain. And so why don't we take care of Item 20 first. And then, we'll go in for the agenda.

So first on Item 20, may I have a motion to approve the item?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And I will be the second, with the Treasurer abstaining.

And for the remainder of the DNR Agenda, is there any discussion on the remainder of the DNR Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Lots of good Program Open Space projects.

GOVERNOR MOORE: There is. May I have a motion to approve?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much. And thank you all for the incredibly important and robust conversation on this.

Next up, University System of Maryland. Mr. Hickey, good morning.

MR. HICKEY: Good morning, Governor. Good morning, Mr. Treasurer, Madam Comptroller. Tom Hickey representing University System of Maryland. We have one item for your consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much. Is there any discussion on the USM Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Not from me.

GOVERNOR MOORE: May I have a motion to approve the USM Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: So moved.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much.
Thank you.

We'll proceed with the MDOT Agenda. Ms. Radomsky, good morning.

MS. RADOMSKY: Good morning, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. For the record, my name is Valerie Radomsky, Chief

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Procurement Officer for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Today, we are presenting 21 agenda items for your consideration. We're seeking approval of five awards to certified small businesses valued at approximately 2.5 million, one award to a minority business enterprise valued at approximately 1.7 million, and two awards to duly certified small minority businesses valued at approximately 2.69 million. We have representatives available to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Is there any discussion on the MDOT Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: May I have a motion to approve the MDOT Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: So moved.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thanks, Ms. Radomsky.

MS. RADOMSKY: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you. And we will conclude with the DGS Agenda. Secretary Chaudhry, good morning.

Good morning, sir. Mr. Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer, for the record, I am Atif Chaudhry, Secretary of the Maryland Department of General Services. Today, the Department is presenting 35 items on our agenda. We will be withdrawing two items today. It is Item 9-CGL as well as Item 34-LT.

Our agenda does feature over \$11 million in capital grants and loans. I did want to highlight one in particular, and that is Item 6-CGL. It provides \$1.3 million in State support to the Kennedy Krieger Institute for the

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renovation of their Center for Autism and Related Disorders. This project will completely renovate over 36,000 square feet of existing outpatient space in their Baltimore City location into a more modern state of the art safe environment for children and youth suffering from -- on the autism spectrum.

As we continue to keep an eye on our minority business participation through contracting, our agenda does feature six contract awards and modifications to certified minority-owned businesses totaling over \$16.3 million. I did want to also highlight one more agenda item, and that is the fact that our agenda does include one contract to a preferred provider totaling over \$11.6 million as well. And we have agency representatives here to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary. I'd like to first make a highlight on something. And first, something that I did not realize I'd become so passionate about over these past four years, which is actually oyster spat restoration. And again, words I never thought as I was growing up would ever come out of my mouth.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: (Indiscernible) talk about taxes.

GOVERNOR MOORE: That's right. But is incredibly important. And I want to highlight Item 16, which the contract award for Oyster Recovery Partnership. And this is really for a small-scale oyster spat restoration efforts in really our rivers and our tributaries that feed into the Chesapeake Bay. And just have become absolutely essential when we're talking about the health and the sustainability of the Bay and all of the efforts that we as a State just have to make sure that we are maintaining and leading on.

And today, as part of that continued commitment to the Bay, we are moving forward with another major milestone with this contract in the Oyster Recovery Partnership. And that's going to rebuild reefs and smaller rivers. And

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we're really proud of this partnership. And also, we're really proud of what this partnership is going to mean, the impact that it's going to have, both in the short term and also in the long term.

So I do want to congratulate DNR. I want to congratulate the Oyster Recovery Partnership on this agreement. I want to convey my thanks and my thanks on behalf of the entire State because this work -- and thank you, Mr. Secretary -- because this work is going to be vitally important to the long-term goals that we have going forward when it comes to making sure that we are -- that we're passing something off that is going to be cleaner and able to be shared in a way that even -- that is going to be better than what we actually inherited.

And we are pleased to be joined today by Mr. Ward Slacum, who's the Executive Director of the Oyster Recovery Partnership, who's going to offer remarks. So Mr. Slacum, good morning. And it's good to see you.

MR. SLACUM: Good morning. Thank you, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. I'm Ward Slacum, the Executive Director of the Oyster Recovery Partnership. And the Oyster Recovery Partnership has participated in the BPW process in the past, but this is the first opportunity that we've had to come here and formally address the Board. And like your comments, Governor -- thanks.

I would like to thank you for your leadership, I'd like to thank you for continuing to support the Oyster Recovery Partnership, and also for your support and allowing us to continue with this important mission of recovering the oysters in Maryland. As you stated in your remarks, under your leadership, we have proven that recovery efforts can make a difference both to supporting our seafood and our marine economy and also to improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

I'd like to also thank you, though, for the leadership team that you

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assembled at the Department of Natural Resources. It's been a pleasure to work with Secretary Kurtz and his team. Our staff are in contact with the scientists over in the Department every day navigating the challenges of executing this mission. Again, ORP -- we look forward to working with the Department, with your Administration in the future as we execute this small-scale restoration contract. And thank you, and I'll take any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you, Ward. And thanks for your -- thanks for both your leadership and your partnership.

One of the joys that I've had over the process of the past year is I -- you know, I serve as chair of the Chesapeake Executive Council. And I know we've been working closely together where we said one of the core priorities that we had for the Executive Council, particularly kind of in this moment, has been really restoring oyster populations within Maryland where we wanted to have that done in five Maryland rivers by the end of 2025. And excited to report that just last year, we planted over 450 million juvenile oysters public reefs, which is the most that's been planted in a single year.

And that could not have happened without the strong partnership that we have. And so we have a lot of work to get done. We have a lot of work that's happened. Over 3,000 acres of restored reefs, almost 13 billion healthy juvenile oysters have been planted since the start of the Administration. But we're just incredibly excited about everything that can and will be done going forward on this important issue.

So any other comments for this item?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yes, it's great. Congratulations.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Yeah.

MR. SLACUM: Thank you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thanks, (indiscernible).

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GOVERNOR MOORE: I know he's trying to say he's getting hungry.

(Laughter.)

TREASURER DAVIS: (Indiscernible).

(Laughter.)

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: And save the shells.

GOVERNOR MOORE: That's right, and save the shells. With that, is there any further discussion on the DGS Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I just have one comment.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Of course.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I just wanted say it was good to see Item 19-S, which is 24 residential child care program beds to increase in-state residential capacity to meet the needs of youth. This is something that I've been working on. I know many members in the General Assembly have been working on for many years with DHS.

It is a travesty that in our State, there are kids who are confined to hospital beds who do not need to be in hospitals. And so you know, just continue to urge DHS to act with alacrity to move quickly to make sure that we are finding space, supporting families so that their kids don't need to be there, and also making sure that we have space for these children to go to. So just wanted to note that. Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there any further discussion on the DGS Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: May I have a motion to approve?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: So moved.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

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TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thanks, Mr. Secretary.

With that, that concludes this meeting of the Board of Public Works. We will see you on September 25th. This meeting is adjourned. Thanks.

(Whereupon, at 10:53 a.m., the meeting was concluded.)