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# **BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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

**January 28, 2026**

**10:02 a.m.**

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# 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

**JOSH KURTZ**

Secretary, Department of Natural Resources

**THOMAS HICKEY**

Director of Procurement and Real Property Initiatives,  
University of Maryland

**VALERIE RADOMSKY**

Chief Procurement Officer, Department of Transportation

**LISA GRIGSBY**

Recording Secretary, Board of Public Works

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# PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNOR MOORE: Good morning, everybody and welcome to today's virtual, but still very active, meeting of the Board of Public Works. It is great seeing you all on screen. But I do want to just highlight before we start the business of the day part of the reason that we are doing this virtually. It's because, you know, we are still seeing the impacts of the winter storm that is still creating very, very dangerous conditions inside of the state of Maryland.

Where on last Wednesday, a week ago, we declared a state of preparedness for the state of Maryland. On Friday, we declared a state of emergency. We also requested that President Trump authorize a federal emergency declaration, which we're thankful that Maryland is one of a handful of states that actually received an emergency declaration because of the conditions and because of the extent of the storm.

And I want to say that since then that the people of our state that we are grateful because Marylanders have heeded the warnings. Marylanders have stayed home. Marylanders have saved lives because of those decisions. And we are grateful that we're now looking at a situation that, despite having a historic storm hit us with severe implications not just in the state of Maryland, but a storm that has hit now a good portion of the country, that we are thankful that we can report that Maryland has had no casualties and no serious injuries. And so to all Marylanders who heeded the warnings, we just want to say thank you.

As forecasted, the storm impacted the entire state. And so it demanded an all-government response. And I want to recognize all of our first responders, all of our agencies, our local partners, and folks who were just looking out for their neighbors and making sure they were protecting their

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communities. We've had nearly 80 personnel from our Department of Emergency Management and other State agencies that have staffed the State Emergency Operations Center, and they worked throughout the weekend. They were monitoring around the clock. These are people who left their families to make sure that our families were okay and protected.

The Department of Transportation has deployed now over 2,600 pieces of equipment and thousands of staff to plow our roads and coordinate our highway action teams that we had teams out there that were preparing the roads before the storm came, that were clearing the roads after the storm came. And if you look at the State highways, I just want to give a special shout out to The Department of Transportation on the work they did to get those State highways cleared as quickly as they did.

Our State police deployed more than 150 additional troopers to quickly respond to storm-related calls and activities. We have the National Guard that were activated. You know, the countless law enforcement, fire, rescue, National Guard soldiers, and airmen just did a tremendous job and they worked in a very coordinated fashion. And I want to thank them as well for all their hard work and for always being ready when our state needs it.

And so my final ask of Marylanders today remains the same as it was on Friday. Please use common sense and please show common courtesy. Please make sure you're looking after your neighbors, please make sure you're still moving slowly on the roads, and please make sure that you are ensuring that your friends and family are okay during this time. To remain updated, you can, as always, go to [mdready.maryland.gov](http://mdready.maryland.gov) to find out about which roads have been plowed. You can go to [roads.maryland.gov](http://roads.maryland.gov). Stay active and also just -- and those are mechanisms for you to stay informed.

And if you get yourself in a bad situation, please pull off the road

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as far as possible, activate your hazards, remain in your vehicle. And also, Marylanders should dial #77 for any roadside assistance from first responders. Again, that's #77 for any roadside assistance. And so I'd like to also thank my partners in this, the Comptroller and also the Treasurer, for all of the leadership and support throughout this time as well.

And Madam Comptroller, I know you have a welcome new face that that you wanted to talk about as well. So I'll turn it over to you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Great. Thank you so much, Mr. Governor and I echo all your sentiments. Thank you to all of the crews who are helping the people dig out, and get out, and be safe around the state.

I just wanted -- even though we're virtual for our first, I think our first all virtual meeting of the term, I also wanted to introduce -- we have a great new BPW, Board of Public Works Director, Michele Lambert, who has joined us in the Office of the Comptroller. So so pleased to have her as our Board of Public Works Director and Tom Brennan as our Board of Public Works liaison. I just feel really grateful for a fantastic team to help make sure that we can be an independent voice reviewing contracts and expenditures for the State. So thank you so much and look forward to the work of the day.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much.

And with that, we'll get started with the business of the day.  
Secretary Gontrum, good morning.

MR. GONTRUM: Good morning, Governor. And good morning to you, Mr. Treasurer and Madam Comptroller. There are 16 items on the Secretary's Agenda this morning and one report of an emergency procurement contract award. I'm happy to assist with answering any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary.

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Is there any discussion on the Secretary's Agenda?

TREASURER DAVIS: Governor, may I? I'm not sure where's the raise hand button on this, so you got to -- you guys got to bear with the old guy trying to figure this stuff out.

I just want to, on Items 14 and 15, the Morgan State University demolition project, I just want to tip my hat to the University. I saw their MBE goal for the four -- I guess, four different phases that they're going to roughly average 40 percent, and I think that's a phenomenal showing. And just as I can complain or criticize when folks may not get the number we want, I certainly want to tip my hat and congratulate when they far exceed what we expect. So congratulations to Morgan.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Hear, hear.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Hear, hear.

GOVERNOR MOORE: It's really is an extraordinary goal and set up, so thank you.

May I have a motion to approve the Secretary's Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the Secretary's Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding, thank you so much.

We'll proceed with the Department of Natural Resources. Secretary Kurtz, I was -- it's great to see you. It's great to see you back, my friend. I hope --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Congratulations.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Yes, congratulations.

MR. KURTZ: Thank you. Thank you very much, sir. Thank you,

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all. I'm getting a little bit of sleep, so bear with me. I apologize if I, you know, messed this up.

But it's great to see you, Mr. Governor, Mr. Treasurer, and Madam Comptroller. For the record, Josh Kurtz, Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The Department has 14 items on our agenda for your consideration today, and I'm happy to take any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much.

Is there any discussion on the DNR Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Not from me today.

TREASURER DAVIS: Nope.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. May I have a motion to approve the DNR Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the DNR Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And by the way, Mr. Secretary, your team did a great job while you are on paternity leave. So please give them our thanks as well.

MR. KURTZ: I will. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Congratulations, again.

We'll now go to the University System of Maryland. Mr. Hickey, good morning.

MR. HICKEY: Good morning, Governor, Mr. Treasurer, and Madam Comptroller. Tom Hickey representing the University System of

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Maryland. There are seven items for your consideration, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there any discussion on the USM Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No discussion right now. Thanks for all the comments including those on sustainability. Appreciate it.

TREASURER DAVIS: (Indiscernible).

GOVERNOR MOORE: Motion to approve the USM Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the USM Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much.

Thanks, Mr. Hickey.

MR. HICKEY: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: We'll go onto 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 Procurement Officer for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Today, we are presenting 15 items for your consideration. We are seeking approval of one award to a duly certified minority business enterprise and small business totaling \$888,000 and five awards to certified small businesses totaling \$3 million. We have representatives available to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: That is great. Thank you.

Is there any discussion on the MDOT Agenda?

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COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No, I don't know if we've been together since the A/B connector opened. Maybe we have and I missed it, but congratulations to MAA on that. Really exciting.

TREASURER DAVIS: Yeah.

MS. RADOMSKY: Thank you. I appreciate it.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great day.

Motion to approve the MDOT Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the MDOT Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thanks so much, Ms. Radomsky.

MS. RADOMSKY: Thank you, Governor.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And we'll conclude with the DGS Agenda. Secretary Chaudhry, is he on?

MR. CHAUDHRY: I'm here, sir.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Oh, great. As we turn it over to you, I also just want to say thank you to you, Mr. Secretary. You know, you and the team of DGS have just done a remarkable job throughout this storm in getting all of our complexes cleared out. So really well done and please extend our thanks to the team as well.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Will do, sir. Thank you. Our team worked very hard over the weekend and still -- we're still working. We're still clearing, still de-icing. It's a bit of a challenge, but thank you for the recognition for that, sir. Our team works very, very hard on that. And our Capitol Police as well, working throughout the storm keeping everyone safe.

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GOVERNOR MOORE: Yeah, we -- I'll say, I hope that Mother Nature can provide an assist relatively soon because it's so cold. The only way to clear it now is just manual, so I wish Mother Nature would be a little bit more helpful right now.

MR. CHAUDHRY: I hope so. I had a tough time banging on that ice around the complex. It was -- it's tough. It's tough to get through, so thank you.

Mr. Governor, Madam Comptroller, and Mr. Treasurer, for the record, I'm Atif Chaudhry, Secretary of the Maryland Department of General Services. Today, the Department -- excuse me -- is presenting 52 items on our agenda including one report of an expedited procurement. We are withdrawing one item today, and that's Item 28-CGL.

Our agenda does feature 29 capital grants and loans totaling over \$14.1 million. I just want to highlight one in particular, and that is Item 1-CGL, which is a grant of \$160,000 to the Board of Directors of the Anne Arundel County Food Bank for the purchase of a new 20-foot refrigerated truck for food distribution, as well as planning and site preparation for the construction of a new facility there.

As we continue to keep an eye on minority business participation and goals, our agenda does feature five contract actions to certified minority businesses totaling more than \$28.2 million. And we have 18 contract actions to certified small businesses totaling more than \$36.7 million. And we have agency representatives here to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thanks so much, Mr. Secretary.

I understand we have a few speaker requests this morning. In the interest of time, we'll just ask that our speakers will limit their comments to three minutes.

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Secretary Gontrum, you can serve as time keeper -- or the person who just pushes the mute button, if people go over. Our first speaker request is for Item 20, which is a request to award \$370,000 capital grant to Maryland Turkish American Inhabitants, Inc. for -- and this is for essential upgrades to enhance safety and improve classroom spaces for their preschool education center over in Howard County.

To speak to this, I'd like to recognize Dr. Fevzi Sarac, who joins us virtually to speak in support of this item. Dr. Sarac, great to see you.

DR. SARAC: Yes. Good morning, Governor Moore, Comptroller Lierman, Treasurer Davis, and distinguished members of Public Works. My name is Fevzi Sarac and I am the Executive Director of MARTI. MARTI is a community-based nonprofit serving families in Maryland through educational, cultural, and civic programs. Education has always been central to our mission. We are excited about this opportunity and fully prepared to move forward immediately about our preschool education center.

We already applied and completed the DBA registration. The preschool will operate as the name of Sunrise Academy. We have moved well beyond the planning stage. An architect has completed the initial drawings. We are in contact with a licensed contractor, and we have begun selecting age-appropriate furniture and learning materials. The LBI funding will be used responsibly for acquisition, planning, construction, and essential furniture allowing us to deliver a high quality and sustainable project.

In short, we are ready. The planning is complete. The partnerships are in place and the community need is clear. We respectfully ask for your support to move this project forward for our county families. Thank you all for -- thanks for your time and leadership. We would be honored to serve our county through this initiative.

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GOVERNOR MOORE: Wonderful, great work. Thank you so much for your testimony, Dr. Sarac.

DR. SARAC: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you.

Next, we have a speaker request for Item 21, which is a request to award a \$14,000 capital grant to the Frederick Woman's Civic Club for rehabilitation and modernization of the historic Steiner House over in Frederick County. I would like to now recognize Jeanne Pim, who joins us virtually to speak on behalf of this item.

Ms. Pim, good morning.

MR. GONTRUM: Governor, I'm not seeing Ms. Pim online at the moment.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is she online?

MR. GONTRUM: No, sir.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay. So maybe we'll -- we'll continue on and see if she logs on.

I would actually -- I'd actually personally like to highlight two more capital grants on today's agenda as well. Item 3 is a request to award a \$100,000 capital grant for the rehabilitation of the historic building at 1103 North Washington Street in Baltimore. This building will be used to create a workforce development academy and provide training and placement for 425 residents each year. The academy is going to focus on training in the field of artificial intelligence and materials manufacturing. And so we're excited to see this development.

I'd also like to highlight Item 9, which is a request to award a \$8 million capital grant to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center for essential renovations to the John R. Burton Pavilion. The Bayview Medical Center is a

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vital anchor over in southwest Baltimore and it is, importantly, the State's only adult burn center. And 20 percent of those served by the center are low income, uninsured, and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries -- which, by the way, is the highest percentage in the entire state. This grant is going to allow the center to renovate the Burton pavilion and create 24 new private rooms, which gives a chance to better serve the needs, and the care, and the safety for all the patients.

And lastly, I'd like to highlight Item 48, which is a request from the Department of Education to award a \$95.3 million contract to NCS Pearson for design and support services statewide for the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program. To speak about this, I would like to invite Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent of Schools, who can share more about this investment.

Dr. Wright, are you on?

(Pause.)

DR. WRIGHT: Now -- wait, wait. Can you hear me?

GOVERNOR MOORE: We hear you, Dr. Wright. Good morning.

DR. WRIGHT: Good morning. Sorry, I'm a little new at this one.

Good morning, Governor. Good morning, Madam Controller.

And good morning, Mr. Treasurer. In February 2024, as State Superintendent, I announced the formation of a task force to examine Maryland's accountability and assessment systems. The task force brought together stakeholders from across the state with the aim of increasing transparency and accountability around these systems by strengthening the connections between school ratings and student achievement.

The task force had its opening meeting on May 2nd, 2024, and submitted a final report with recommendations to the State Board of Education in

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December of '24. One recommendation was the need to update the current statewide assessments and have a consistent, uniform design for all grade level and content area tests. This recommendation was also well-timed in that the current assessment vendors contracts are expiring in December of '26.

MSDE is seeking to move to a new state assessment program to accomplish the following goals: improve technical quality and validity by adopting assessments that meet current psychometric standards including the transition to multi-stage adaptive testing to better measure student performance across the full range of achievement. Two, increase equity and accessibility through enhanced accommodation delivery ensuring more consistent, timely, and appropriate access for students with disabilities and our multilingual learners.

Three, enhance the instructional usefulness by incorporating an optional interim assessment program that provides educators with actionable data to inform instruction throughout the school year. Four, expand and strengthen assessment content by augmenting the existing MSDE Item Bank to ensure an adequate number of questions at all difficulty levels allowing for greater flexibility and an increased number of released items. And four (sic), to improve the efficiency and coherence by consolidating multiple vendors into an integrated assessment platform reducing complexity and improving system alignment.

MSDE's program and procurement teams have worked hard to solicit a comprehensive RFP to consolidate multiple contracts to create a streamlined solution that will meet the needs of our program and bring operational and fiscal efficiencies once the contract is fully operational in the upcoming school year. I appreciate the opportunity to present this contract to the Board and request that you approve the contract to NCIS Pearson. And I stand ready, as does my team, to answer any of your questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much, Dr. Wright.

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Are there any questions from either the Comptroller or the Treasurer? Great.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Not on my end.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay.

Dr. Wright, I just want to -- also, I just want to take a moment to say thank you for the outstanding work that you and your team at MSDE are doing. You know, I was just going over some data and we have seen a 987 percent increase in youth apprenticeships in Maryland. That increased from 127 in 2021 to 1,380 in 2025. Over the past year, we've seen an increase in graduation rates for African American students, students with disabilities, students of economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Under your tenure, we have been able to cut the teacher shortage by half in the state of Maryland, and reading and math scores are up in nearly every grade in the state of Maryland. So I just want to thank you for the work -- the continued focus and the continued results that you and your team are continuing to drive in Maryland's public education system.

DR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Governor. That's very kind. I appreciate it.

GOVERNOR MOORE: I appreciate you.

Are there any other questions or items to discuss on the DGS Agenda? Madam Comptroller?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Governor.

Dr. Wright, if you don't mind, I did just want to highlight some of the work from Item 41 as well, which is the contract modification for the kindergarten readiness assessments. Is that okay, if you stick around for a minute?

DR. WRIGHT: Yeah, absolutely. And I've got Krishna Tallur on

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the call --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Oh, perfect.

DR. WRIGHT: -- as well as Tim Guy from Assessment, so either of those folks can take a question too.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thanks. And first, I just want to say I had a very helpful conversation with both of them earlier, but I had thought, you know, if a member of the public was looking at this, you know, as a former disability rights attorney, it certainly stuck my eyes that we were modifying this assessment to include assessments developed specifically for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and blind and visually impaired.

Sort of upon first glance, you would think, like, well, why didn't we do that to begin with, which was my question. And of course, you all -- you clarified that how we -- the need to do even more. That we did -- that you did include this originally, but you were proactive in making sure that you reached out to the School for the Deaf and Maryland School for the Blind.

So would one of you like to talk a little bit about how the accessibility requirements were addressed in the original RFP and the proactive work you then did after that was released with your partners at those schools to make sure that all of our students have access to this test and assessment?

DR. WRIGHT: Sure, Krishna, I'll either let you or Tim respond to that.

MR. TALLUR: Absolutely.

Good morning, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. Krishna Tallur for MSDE. As we discussed in our briefing, Madam Comptroller, and follow-up conversations with your team, when the contract was originally released -- and this was an expedited procurement that the Board of Public Works approved for us to begin solicitation in April of 2024. The contract language

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included the accessibility provisions and the vendor provided the software with minimum accessibility requirements that the Department was looking for fulfillment in the contract.

As the implementation of the system began, Mr. Guy and his team began field testing and stakeholder engagements with the Maryland School for the Deaf and the Maryland School for the Blind. Those conversations led us in the path where we agreed that we needed to do more in addressing the feedbacks and suggestions they brought. That is the reason why Mr. Guy, our procurement team, our attorneys engaged in this contract modification that we are bringing forward for you.

And Tim, if your microphone is on and if there is anything here you would like to add, please go ahead.

MR. GUY: Thanks. I think that -- you can hear me, yes?

MR. TALLUR: Yes.

MR. GUY: So I think that we -- like Krishna said, the overall combination delivery was met by the original contract. But I think that the missing provisions here are that we're working with kindergarten students, and so their actual ability to interact with like a refreshable braille display, for instance, is not quite developed yet. Their ability to --

And for our deaf and hearing-impaired students, there was accommodations in the previous KRA that excluded test items and we had kind of carried over that kind of approach into the new system. And working with our stakeholders, we really wanted to make sure that we are getting a valid assessment result from that student group and to improve the actual delivery of accommodations over previous setups. So that's where we're headed, and I think we're in a good place. Thank you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: That's great. Thank you for that.

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Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

MR. GONTRUM: I'm so sorry, Madam Comptroller.

Mr. Guy, could you just really briefly introduce yourself for the record, please?

MR. GUY: Oh, sorry. Tim Guy, Assistant State Superintendent of Accountability and Assessment.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

I think that context is really helpful and I just want to say that I'm genuinely proud that this contract will now not only serve our students who are deaf or hard of hearing and our students who are blind or have low vision, but will actually reflect one of the strongest accessibility standards in the country for kindergarten screening.

And so, you know, we're the home of the National Federation of the Blind. And so it's certainly fitting that we are putting forward, you know, these best practices. So you know, thank you for being proactive in field testing. Hopefully, we can do that beforehand next time. But this is so great, I'm really excited about it.

And thank you, Mr. Governor, for letting me chat with them.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Of course, thank you so much. Thank you.

Is there any further discussion on the DGS Agenda? And may I have a motion to approve the DGS Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the DGS Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Beautiful. Thank you so much.

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TREASURER DAVIS: Governor?

GOVERNOR MOORE: Yes?

TREASURER DAVIS: I didn't know. Are you about to conclude or was there other business? Because I wanted to --

GOVERNOR MOORE: I'm about to turn it back over to you.

TREASURER DAVIS: Thank you, sir.

I bring this up because I felt it was somewhat timely, when we were doing capital grants and loans. I've been hearing from some members of the General Assembly -- and I think maybe the three of us or -- I don't think it's your problem, Secretary Chaudhry, but I think there is some sort of interpretation problem that we're getting from one of our assistant attorney generals and projects are being held up that I know various communities throughout the state of Maryland depend on. Our processes, in general, can slow it down at least from the time they think it's going to happen, but it certainly shouldn't be backed up the way it is over an interpretation.

So I wanted to bring that up in this forum to say that I think we need to get together and get that matter resolved. I know you, and Comptroller, and myself, we want to see everybody that's entitled to the resources and the funding, they get it and they get it in a timely fashion. Like I said, I think it's just an interpretation issue on behalf of one of our assistant attorney generals. But whatever the case may be, we need to get that moving. And I welcome any insight or input --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yeah.

TREASURER DAVIS: -- you know, at a later time that you all can give me that we can get this up and running.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I appreciate that, Mr. Treasurer. I read the letter this week from the assistant AG, and I think that we should

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probably -- we should probably bring this up with the Attorney General and get further guidance, and then also decide if we can move forward sort of regardless of the interpretation. And if there needs to be language in the Capital Budget Bill this year or the BRFA to clarify going forward what the law is. So I think there's -- I really appreciate you bringing that up. It's really concerning to me. This is, you know, this is one interpretation. There are probably other interpretations.

So bringing this to central AG, I think probably makes sense. But I'm open to other ideas, of course, and happy to work with you all so that we can get this resolved. You know, these are organizations, we should remember, that are seeking reimbursement, so they are out these funds right now and are really hurting. And it could cause severe fiscal distress for some of them, if they can't get this money quickly. So I think this is quite an urgent issue. I had planned to raise it with the AG today, when I see him and but open to other ideas as well.

GOVERNOR MOORE: I concur with both of you. Actually, I was thinking -- I think that the proper next step is probably going to the AG on it as well, so I think that's great. And we can find some time to follow up afterwards as well after you have that conversation with him.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Great.

TREASURER DAVIS: Thank you.

And like I said, I didn't mean to -- you know, I know this isn't necessarily the appropriate time, but I know a lot of people --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No, it's important.

TREASURER DAVIS: -- count on us for that and I wanted to put that out there that we are working on it.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Absolutely.

GOVERNOR MOORE: It is important and this is the right forum

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because you're right. We all have heard from organizations who are literally having to look at things like bridge loans because of structural challenges and not because of any other reason, and it's unnecessary. So thank you for that.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yep.

TREASURER DAVIS: Thank you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I'm glad you raised it.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Yeah.

And Madam Comptroller, before we close, I know you have an important reminder for everybody.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Sure, yes. Important, maybe not welcome.

It's not spring training yet, unfortunately. Instead, first we have the start of the 2026 tax return filing season. So just a shout out to our 1,300 team members, the Office of the Comptroller. We are prepared to provide service for our taxpayers and build upon last year's success during which we processed roughly three million returns and issued nearly three billion in refunds to over two million taxpayers, so some big numbers there.

So during tax season, officially opened this Monday. The IRS sets the date. During our first couple weeks of tax season, we test our fraud detection models and other systems to ensure efficient and accurate returns processing. So that ultimately, Marylanders receive return -- receive their correct refunds. So to avoid potential delays in processing or receiving refunds, I continue to encourage Marylanders to try to file their returns electronically.

Last year, we averaged less than -- fewer than three days to process electronically filed returns, once we were up and running, compared to nearly 17 days for paper returns. And of course, if you file your paper return at the very end, you can see the huge stack of mail in our mail room. Just we have people

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opening it, which takes weeks.

So just really appreciate the work. This is our last -- fingers crossed -- our last tax season with our old COBOL-based mainframe system, tax return system, processing system. We are moving later this year into a new modern system, and we're excited about that. And I just want to say thank you to everybody for their patience, their work, and for pitching in to do their part to help build communities that are more equitable, more resilient, and more prosperous.

Thanks, Governor.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much, Madam Comptroller. Thank you.

TREASURER DAVIS: Governor, when the Comptroller gets a chance, can you or she explain to me what a refund is? I don't think I've ever had one.

(Laughter.)

TREASURER DAVIS: I'd like one.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yeah, it is interesting when people come up to me at events and say, "Oh, I just sent you a check." And I'm like, "Not to me, I don't keep that. That's for our schools and our roads." You know? Or when they say, "You just sent me a check." And I'm like, "Oh, great. I'm glad we sent you a check."

GOVERNOR MOORE: Yeah.

TREASURER DAVIS: You've never sent me a check.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I'm sorry. It's nothing personal, Mr. Treasurer.

TREASURER DAVIS: Comptroller (indiscernible).

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: It's nothing personal.

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TREASURER DAVIS: Thanks, guys.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Well, that concludes today's meeting of the Board of Public Works. The next meeting will hopefully be a warmer February 18th. So with that, meeting adjourned. Thanks, everybody.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

TREASURER DAVIS: Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 10:35 a.m., the meeting was concluded.)