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Fairfax County General Assembly Delegation
(submitted via email)

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your interest in local police matters and for your letter dated June 11 about United States Park Police (USPP) reforms. I agree that the actions on June 1, 2020 against peaceful protesters in Lafayette Park were unnecessary and unjustified. As you noted, especially considering the history of USPP conduct in Fairfax County and the region, this incident did leave me concerned about Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) agreements with USPP.

While you mention that "Arlington County withdrew its officers", it is important to begin by confirming that no FCPD officers or resources were in Washington, D.C. during any recent protest operations, including the June 1 incident listed above. To be clear, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will not support the deployment of officers to forcefully push away protesters for the gains of a political leader. Fairfax County supports the actions of peaceful protesters and will encourage continued dialogue among the police, the Board, and our residents.

I have since spoken with Police Chief Roessler and Deputy County Executive Rohrer to confirm that we have not and will not be supporting requests made by the USPP or other federal agencies until we have assurances that our officers will not be used, as I stated above, to oppress peaceful protests or in political stunts.

Additionally, I have confirmed that no current Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or Mutual Aid Agreements (MAAs) exist solely between FCPD and the USPP. However, there is a National Capital Region MAA between participating jurisdictions of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Under the provisions of that agreement, a Greater Metropolitan Washington Area Police Mutual Aid Operational Plan (MAOP) exists, which has multiple local, state, and federal signatories, including USPP. It is my understanding that the Virginia State Police are signatories as well, and I am certain you are already reviewing the extent of the state's involvement in the MAOP. Our Department alone cannot unilaterally amend the operational plan agreement. As you know, local governments in our region must work together on many things, including public safety. FCPD could cease to be a signatory, but that may harm the County in not being able to request or provide mutual aid to other localities, particularly those in Northern Virginia. Although the former is fairly rare, the latter does routinely occur.

That said, we have asked that this agreement be brought for discussion at an upcoming Chief Administrative Officers Committee of COG. We believe that review and amendments to the regional MAA will need to move through the COG executive level committees with direction to the respective committees for immediate review. I am hopeful, through your efforts, that the state will also be involved in this review.

Please know that I view this issue with the utmost concern. It is all of our responsibility to restore public trust. In a region with such diversity, we need to ensure everyone in our community feels safe and welcome. Clearly, the documents discussed above need review, and I am glad Fairfax County is helping to lead that conversation.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey C. McKay
Chairman

cc: Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Bryan Hill, County Executive
Dave Rohrer, Deputy County Executive for Public Safety
Edwin C. Roessler, Jr., Chief of Police