Discussion Points

STATE PAROLE BOARD

1. During his testimony before the Senate and Assembly Appropriations Committees during the FY 2012 budget process the Parole Board Chairman stated, “The Parole Board continues to look for savings across the agency. For example, the State Parole Board is currently reviewing all leases/building sites to determine what sites may be consolidated to improve operational efficiency and reduce costs. The agency continues to look at all operations with eye towards creating a more efficient, less costly state agency.

- Question: What success has the State Parole Board had with consolidating building sites, and reducing the cost of Parole Board operations? How have these consolidations affected parolee access to parole offices?

The State Parole Board (SPB) has completed several consolidations of district offices in an effort to streamline operations and reduce the overall costs of leased space use through the Department of Treasury.

In May, 2011, the North Brunswick Fugitive Unit office was closed and fugitive officers were attached to the United States Marshalls Service, New York/New Jersey Regional Task Force. SPB fugitive officers are now located within federal office buildings as well as a new office located at Eggerts Crossing constructed in conjunction with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Funding for the construction of the new office was provided by the U.S. Marshall’s Service.

An Office of the Public Defender moved into the vacated space at North Brunswick alleviating the need for a new lease to be issued and reducing the cost of space leased by SBP by $64,600.

In June, 2011, SPB vacated the space for District Office #5 in Elizabeth. Officers were transferred to existing leased space in Newark, adjacent to SPB District Office #9. A satellite office was also established at the Community Resource Center in Elizabeth to provide parolees access to parole officers. These changes resulted in an annual savings of $111,000 in the Central Rent budget.

In January, 2012, SPB office space at District Office #8 in Galloway was reduced by 40% to allow for another state agency to utilize the same building and alleviate the need for a new lease to be issued. The reduced cost of space leased by SPB is approximately $88,000.

The lease in Vineland for District Office #10 is being vacated in May or June of 2012. Officers and staff are being relocated to an existing leased building in Bridgeton resulting in a savings of $166,150 in the Central Rent budget.
Discussion Points (Cont’d)

SPB is currently working with the Department of Treasury to reduce SPB’s office space in Jersey City to allow for another state agency to utilize the space. This change will result in a reduction of roughly 30% of SPB’s leased space in Jersey City, reducing SPB’s leased space cost by approximately $103,000.

The total savings from all of these consolidations is estimated at $532,750. None of the changes to SPB’s leases or district office moves have impacted parolee access to parole offices.

2. Recent discussions have occurred among the Legislature, the Division of Probation Services, the Parole Board and the various employee unions about the potential of transferring the Division of Probation Services, which is currently located within the Judiciary, to the State Parole Board, which is currently in, but not of, the Department of Corrections.

- **Question:** How would this transfer impact the operations of the State Parole Board? What additional training would be required to integrate probation officers within the State Parole Board? What would be the cost of this training? What additional resources, if any, would be required to facilitate this transfer of personnel and duties? What would be the costs or savings generated by this transfer?

The State Parole Board is not aware of any discussions regarding this issue. Assuming this initiative is similar to previous bills that have been put forward, the State Parole Board does not support this proposal as it is impossible to achieve a budgetary savings.

Although it is not known exactly how this change would be effectuated, the State Parole Board estimates a general fund cost increase of at least $20 million for the plan to transfer probation officers to the Division of Parole. The cost of equalizing salary levels for probation officers to that of parole officer is estimated to be approximately $18 million. Training costs are assumed at nearly $2 million. Finally, increased costs for leased space, equipment and pensions are difficult to calculate but are expected to be very significant. The State Parole Board is not aware of any cost savings related to this initiative.
3. According to the FY 2013 Summary of Changes report, The Parole Violator Assessment and Treatment Program is anticipated to achieve $533,000 in savings during FY 2013 as a result of program efficiencies. Budget evaluation data indicate that the program is anticipated to serve 135 participants in FY 2013, the same number as in FY2012.

- **Question:** Please provide a description of the proposed efficiencies.

Due to the effective coordination of efforts with the Department of Corrections, the State Parole Board has been able to consolidate revocation hearings directly at the Central Reception Assignment Facility (CRAF) in West Trenton allowing us to discontinue the contracted Regional Assessment Center in Trenton, while still resulting in the depopulation of county jails with parole violators statewide. The $533,000 reduction relates to the annual cost of the facility in Trenton. The evaluation data did not change as it was assumed that the assessments would be performed at CRAF.

4. According to the FY 2013 Summary of Changes report, The Parolee Electronic Monitoring program is projected to save $250,000 in program efficiencies. Budget evaluation data indicates that the population of offenders served by this program has declined from 400 in FY 2011, to 268 in FY2012 and 250 in FY2013.

- **Question:** Please provide a description of the proposed efficiencies implemented within this program. Why has the population within the program steadily declined during the last three years?

The program efficiencies relate directly to the reduction of contract rates for electronic monitoring services. The contract was re-bid last year by the Department of Treasury. A contract was awarded however the award is being contested by the losing bidder. Although that issue is not yet resolved, the new reduced rates have gone into effect and the State Parole Board can assume a budgetary savings.

Regarding the evaluation data, it is true that electronic monitoring participants have declined overall from a budgeted number of 400 to a projected number of 250 in FY 13. Conversely, GPS participation has increased from a budgeted number of 200 to a projected number of 325 in FY 2013. The State Parole Board has been able to effectively manage the cost differences between the two programs without requesting a budgetary increase.