



Department of General Services
Opening Statement – Secretary Curt Topper
House Appropriations Hearing
February 26, 2019

Good morning Chairman Saylor, Chairman Bradford, and members of the House Appropriations Committee. I am Curt Topper, Secretary for the Department of General Services (DGS). Beside me is Beverly Hudson, Deputy Secretary for Administration.

Thank you for the honor of appearing before you today to discuss the Department's proposed 2019-2020 budget, and how DGS is helping to reshape Commonwealth operations and deliver a government that works.

As you know, DGS doesn't typically serve Pennsylvanians directly. Our role is more indirect. We provide the facilities, equipment, goods and services that make it possible for other government agencies – our direct customers – to serve all Pennsylvanians. Our efforts improve the Commonwealth's bottom line and yield valuable resources that can be reinvested to meet critical needs. Because of the visibility that our central role affords, DGS is also able to guide the Commonwealth's overall efforts to meet enterprise goals such as improved diversity and inclusion in our contracting or greater overall energy efficiency.

Every day, we challenge ourselves to run the business of our government more like a business, to employ best practices from industry, and to deliver more value more efficiently than the private sector can. Despite some significant obstacles, we have met these challenges and we are proving that sustained success is possible. We are helping our government to operate more efficiently, effectively and safely. And we are indeed delivering exceptional value for all Pennsylvanians.

During each of the last four years' budget hearings, I have provided specific testimony about the impact of successful DGS initiatives such as restoring commercial best practices to procurement, consolidating our mail operation, modernizing our public works operation, implementing new technology platforms such as fleet telematics, reducing our real estate footprint and driving down our overall energy consumption. Throughout the last year, all these initiatives continued to provide enterprise savings and significant value for the customer agencies that DGS serves.

This year's budget proposal provides sufficient resources for DGS to secure and maintain our facilities here in the capitol complex while we continue to seek innovative ways to better serve

customers and reduce costs. As always, we endeavor to be as transparent as possible, and I welcome your questions about any specific initiatives and transactions for which the department is responsible.

As we embark on Governor Wolf's second term, my team is thinking seriously about what it would mean to put our department on a permanent trajectory characterized by sustained, continuously improved operational performance.

As you know, changes in the broad consumer marketplace create an ever more demanding set of expectations from the citizens that our government serves. Consumers increasingly expect an "Amazon Prime" like experience with infinite potential choices, delivered the next day, no matter what business they're dealing with. Our customers all have diminishing understanding of or patience for even necessary bureaucracy. They expect our systems to be increasingly effective and accommodating to their individual requirements.

This trend is bound to continue, and it is even affecting the relatively invisible lines of business for which agencies like DGS are responsible. The implication is that no matter what we do, we must do it well; we must do it better today than we did it yesterday; and we must do it better tomorrow than we've done it today.

At DGS, we intend to build on our current momentum and to fully embrace this challenge. Success will surely involve a change in our collective mindset. We will need to engage the 850 proud public servants who comprise the agency to build a more systematic problem-solving and customer-centric culture from the ground up. One where all have a greater clarity of purpose and are safe and free to innovate and improve.

I hope the members of this committee will join me in supporting our ongoing transformation. The dollars invested in DGS annually by the administration and the general assembly are already yielding a consistent, positive rate of return but I believe our best years are still ahead of us.

I would be happy to take your questions.