

Rifle-Rated Armor and Less Lethal 40mm Program

FY2026 Request: \$750,000

Reference No: 66297

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Equipment / Commodities

Category: Public Protection

Location: Statewide

House District: Statewide (HD 1 - 40)

Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1 - 40)

Contact: Dianna Thornton

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2025 - 06/30/2030

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Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) will:

- 1) Equip Alaska State Troopers with rifle-rated body armor and helmets
- 2) Replace current less lethal 12-gauge shotguns with 40mm less lethal launchers
- 3) Procure rifle-rated ballistic shields to enhance officer safety against high-caliber firearm threats, which are increasingly used in active shooter events and assaults.

Funding:	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>FY2029</u>	<u>FY2030</u>	<u>FY2031</u>	<u>Total</u>
1004 Gen Fund	\$750,000						\$750,000
Total:	\$750,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$750,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

The DPS Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team and Drug Unit currently have advanced armor, but much of it is expired and needs to be updated.

Project Description/Justification:

New 40mm less lethal launchers will replace the outdated shotguns, which have demonstrated a 60 percent failure rate. The new launchers will be effective de-escalation tools. The 40mm less lethal launchers have been widely adopted by law enforcement agencies for their accuracy, range, and versatility. Effective less lethal options are critical to the department's ability to manage situations without resorting to deadly force.

The ballistic shields will be distributed across rural and hub trooper posts, providing critical protection against high-caliber firearm threats. This will also ensure that in the event of a mass shooting, that appropriate equipment is forward deployed and there is no delay while law enforcement awaits appropriate equipment.

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The DPS has taken proactive steps to ensure responsible and effective deployment of less lethal munitions. The department has recently approved a comprehensive less lethal munitions policy for patrol, which ensures that the utilization of less lethal impact devices aligns with the highest standards of professionalism and accountability within the department.

The department's outdated less lethal system and expired body armor presents significant risks that cannot be addressed with current resources. Without this new equipment, troopers will continue to face considerable risks from high-caliber firearm assaults, and the continued use of failing less lethal shotguns may result in increased reliance on lethal force. The lack of adequate protective gear including body armor, helmets, and ballistic shields, could lead to higher injury or fatality rates among officers, compromising their ability to perform their duties safely and effectively. This would not only endanger officers, but also pose greater public safety risks and potentially damage the trust and relationship between the department and the community.