

MARYLAND CORRECTIONS OFFICIAL STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF JAMMING CELL SIGNALS
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Marylands top corrections official said today that while other solutions exist to detect illegal mobile phones in prisons, jamming should still be available for facilities that want to use it.

We still believe that a combination of solutions, including jamming, will be necessary to keep our citizens, employees, and inmates safe from the dangers cell phones in prison create, Gary Maynard, secretary of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, said in a written statement. He echoed that theme in an interview with TRDaily, saying, All I want is our correctional staff to have all the options they can to stop the illegal activity of cellphones.

Among the steps Maryland officials have taken to combat illegal mobile phones in prisons are training dogs to detect the devices and spending \$750,000 on entrance security technology.

Mr. Maynards department hosted a day-long event today to give six vendors the chance to demonstrate alternative solutions to jamming technology. Among those in attendance at the vacant Maryland House of Correction in Jessup were representatives from South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, the District of Columbia, the American Correctional Association, the American Jail Association, the National Governors Association, CTIA; and federal agencies and local counties in Maryland, according to officials.

Theyre going very well, Mr. Maynard said this afternoon of the demonstrations. Ive been really pleased. But he said the state is not in the market at this time to purchase any of the technologies. Were just gathering information, he said. We dont have any funding for any technology. Weve been looking at some budget cuts. However, he said that could change if grant funds became available.

Mr. Maynard also said his department would schedule a demonstration of jamming technology if the National Telecommunications and Information Administration grants a request to hold such a test. Federal law bans the use of cell jamming equipment by non-federal entities, but Maryland wants to host the demonstration at a Baltimore facility that houses federal inmates awaiting trial.

Maryland Gov. Martin OMalley (D.) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D., Md.) filed the request in June but have not gotten a response. In April, a federal jury sentenced a Baltimore drug dealer to four consecutive life terms for using a mobile phone inside a city jail to order the killing of a murder witness.

Mr. Maynard today also expressed optimism that Congress would pass legislation this year that would allow states and localities to petition the FCC for waivers to use jamming technology.

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee last month approved such legislation (S 251). However, the panel made changes to the bill that could make the process more burdensome. For example, before prisons or jails even can seek a waiver, they must file a notice of intent, after which they would have to consult with public safety and commercial licensees on ways a jamming system can be installed to minimize interference. After a waiver is approved but before jamming begins, public safety and commercial licensees would have 30 days to inspect the jamming system to ensure it was installed correctly to avoid any interference. Also, the FCC would have to consider all available technologies to thwart unauthorized use of mobile phones in prisons - not just jamming.

Obviously, it would make it a little more difficult, but I dont think it precludes any of us [from] moving forward on that, Mr. Maynard said of the revised legislation. Right now, theres no option. So any option out there would be better than what we have now. - Paul Kirby,

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