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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association Affirms the Importance of Responsible ALPR

Automated License Plate Reader technology remains an important and effective public safety tool for law enforcement agencies across Massachusetts. When used appropriately, ALPR systems can help officers locate missing or endangered individuals, recover stolen vehicles, identify suspects, and develop critical leads in serious criminal investigations.

The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association supports the continued use of ALPR technology under clear policies, strong supervisory oversight, and meaningful accountability measures.

“Technology and accountability can and must go hand in hand,” said Michael J. Bradley, Jr., Executive Director of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association. “ALPR systems provide law enforcement with timely information that can help protect the public and save lives. At the same time, every search must be connected to a legitimate law enforcement purpose and conducted in accordance with department policy and applicable law. Limited retention periods and robust auditing are important safeguards for ensuring proper use and maintaining public confidence. As technology advances, our policies, training, and oversight practices must evolve with it.”

Departments using ALPR technology should maintain safeguards that include:

- Clearly defined authorized uses;
- Individual user accounts and appropriate access controls;
- Documentation of the law enforcement purpose for each search;
- Limited and clearly established data retention periods;
- Robust auditing and regular supervisory review of system activity;
- Appropriate data access and sharing requirements;
- Training for all authorized users;
- Periodic review and revision of policies as technology and its capabilities evolve; and
- Prompt investigation of any suspected misuse.

Any misuse of law enforcement technology should be taken seriously and addressed through a fair and thorough investigation. When violations are substantiated, appropriate corrective or disciplinary action should follow. At the same time, isolated incidents of misuse should not overshadow the many lawful and successful uses of ALPR technology occurring every day.

Public confidence depends on both operational effectiveness and responsible governance. Law enforcement agencies must be prepared to explain how this technology is used, what safeguards are in place, how long data is retained, and how compliance is monitored and audited.

The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association will continue working with police departments, legal advisors, policymakers, technology providers, and community stakeholders to promote effective policies, responsible oversight, and appropriate transparency.

ALPR technology, when supported by strong and evolving safeguards, gives law enforcement an important capability to investigate crime, protect vulnerable individuals, and keep Massachusetts communities safe.

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