



March 9, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Leader McConnell, and Leader Reid:

We are deeply concerned about efforts to portray automated license plate recognition (ALPR) technology as a national real-time tracking capability for law enforcement. The fact is that this technology and the data it generates is **not** used to track people in real time. ALPR **is** used every day to generate investigative leads that help law enforcement solve murders, rapes, and serial property crimes, recover abducted children, detect drug and human trafficking rings, find stolen vehicles, apprehend violent criminal alien fugitives, and support terrorism investigations.

There is a misconception of continuous government tracking of individuals using ALPR information. This has led to attempts to curtail law enforcement's use of the technology without a proper and fair effort to truly understand the anonymous nature of the data, how it is used, and how it is protected.

We are seeing harmful proposals – appropriations amendments and legislation – to restrict or completely ban law enforcement's use of ALPR technology and data without any effort to truly understand the issue. Yet, any review would make clear that the value of this technology is beyond question, and that protections against mis-use of the data by law enforcement are already in place. That is one of the reasons why critics are hard-pressed to identify any actual instances of mis-use.

If legislative efforts to curtail ALPR use are successful, federal, state, and local law enforcement's ability to investigate crimes will be significantly impacted given the extensive use of the technology today.

We call on Congress to foster a reasonable and transparent discussion about ALPR. We believe strong measures can be taken to ensure citizens' privacy while enabling law enforcement investigators to take advantage of the technology. Strict data access controls, mandatory auditing of all use of ALPR systems, and regular reporting on the use of the technology and data prevent misuse of the capability while enabling law enforcement to make productive use of it. Adoption and enforcement of strong policies on the use of ALPR and other technologies by individual law enforcement agencies would also help.

We strongly urge members of the House and Senate to understand and recognize the substantial daily benefits of this technology to protect the public and investigate dangerous criminals. We urge opposition to any bill or amendment that would restrict the use of ALPR without full consideration of the issue.

Sincerely,



J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police, Montgomery County Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Police Association



Chief Richard Beary
President, International Association of Chiefs of Police



Mike Sena
Director, Northern California Regional Intelligence Center
President, National Fusion Center Association



Ronald C. Sloan
Director, Colorado Bureau of Investigation
President, Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies



Sheriff Donny Youngblood
President, Major County Sheriffs' Association



Bob Bushman
President, National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition



Jonathan Thompson
Executive Director, National Sheriffs' Association



William Johnson
Executive Director, National Association of Police Organizations



Mike Moore
President, National District Attorneys Association



Andrews Matthews
Chairman, National Troopers Coalition

Cc: House Judiciary Committee
Senate Judiciary Committee
House Committee on Homeland Security
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
House Appropriations Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works