KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1350 Norris Road, Bakersfield, CA 93308
661.391.7500 - www.kernsheriff.org

DONNY YOUNGBLOOD
Sheriff - Coroner - Public Administrator

November 10, 2026

Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RESPONSE TO SEPTEMBER 15, 2026, REFERRAL REGARDING THE USE OF FLOCK SAFETY AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER TECHNOLOGY
(Fiscal Impact: None)

On September 15, 2026, your Board directed the Kern County Sheriff's Office to report on the use of Flock Safety automated license plate reader (ALPR) technology in law enforcement investigations. The referral followed concerns raised during public comment regarding privacy, the collection and retention of vehicle information, data sharing, and oversight of the technology.

On November 7, 2023, your Board approved Agreement 616-2023 with Flock Group Inc. for thirty-three fixed ALPR camera systems. On January 7, 2025, the Sheriff's Office brought forward an addendum to expand the system by twenty-one cameras. These systems assist law enforcement personnel in identifying vehicles associated with criminal investigations, locating stolen vehicles, and finding vehicles connected to missing or endangered persons.

ALPR technology captures images of passing vehicles and converts license plate information into searchable text. The information includes the license plate number, vehicle characteristics, date, time, and camera location. Investigators use these observations to identify potential suspect vehicles, corroborate evidence, establish investigative timelines, and eliminate vehicles from consideration. A vehicle observation does not, by itself, establish the identity of the driver or demonstrate that a crime has occurred. Investigative leads require further verification before enforcement action is taken.

As described in the accompanying presentation, fixed ALPR technology provides vehicle information associated with a particular location and time. The ALPR function does not identify drivers or passengers through facial recognition. Its purpose is to provide information relevant to authorized law enforcement activities.

The Sheriff's Office retains ALPR data for thirty days. Following the retention period, data is automatically deleted from the system unless preserved as evidence in connection with an investigation. This limited retention period supports investigative needs while reducing the accumulation of information unrelated to a law enforcement purpose.

The Sheriff's Office operates its ALPR program in compliance with California law and shares ALPR data only with California law enforcement agencies. The Sheriff's Office does not share its ALPR data with federal law enforcement agencies, including federal immigration authorities, or with out-of-state law enforcement agencies.

Access to and use of ALPR information must serve an authorized law enforcement purpose. Appropriate access controls, user training, search documentation, and supervisory oversight are essential to protecting the information and identifying potential misuse. Personal searches or other unauthorized uses are inconsistent with the lawful operation of the system and are governed by Sheriff's Office policy J-3810, Flock Safety Automated License Plate Readers.

The Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of balancing the investigative benefits of ALPR technology with privacy protections and public accountability. The accompanying presentation explains the technology's capabilities, its application to law enforcement investigations, and the safeguards governing retention and data sharing. The Sheriff's Office will continue to evaluate its use of the system to maintain compliance with California law and support the responsible delivery of public safety services throughout Kern County.

There is no fiscal impact associated with this response.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that your Board receive and file.

Sincerely,

DONNY YOUNGBLOOD, Sheriff-Coroner

By: Joel Swanson, Chief Deputy
Detentions Bureau

/hh

Attachment

cc: CAO
County Counsel