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FROM: Gurbir S. Grewal, Attorney General

DATE: December 4, 2019

SUBJECT: **Launching a Pilot Program for Statewide Police Use-of-Force Portal**

I am writing to recognize your police departments as the six New Jersey law enforcement agencies that will participate in the pilot program for the State's new Police Use-of-Force Portal. The six participating towns – Bridgeton, Dover, Linden, Millville, Paterson, and South Brunswick – represent a cross-section of the rich diversity of our state, and they represent an excellent opportunity to fine-tune the portal and the data collection process before we roll out the system statewide. Thank you for your partnership and support for this important initiative, which will not only improve law enforcement training and accountability, but also bolster public confidence in the work of New Jersey law enforcement.

This pilot program represents the next stage in a joint effort to design a new system for obtaining statewide use-of-force data, which the Department of Law & Public Safety launched in partnership with the New Jersey State Police, the County Prosecutors' Association of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, the New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association, the New Jersey Fraternal Order of Police, the State Troopers Superior Officers Association, the State Troopers Non-Commissioned Officers Association, and the State Troopers Fraternal Association.

In December 2018, these law enforcement agencies and organizations called for a "complete overhaul" of our statewide use-of-force data collection system after media reporting exposed gaps in the uniformity of the State's data collection efforts. As we noted at the time,

although individual municipalities, departments, or counties may have effective data collection systems in place, the lack of uniformity across the State makes it difficult to confirm the accuracy of existing data and to draw correct conclusions about the state of law enforcement by aggregating and comparing disparate information from different law enforcement agencies. Numbers rarely tell the full story, moreover, so it is crucial that we not only obtain accurate data, but also that we provide the context necessary to understand and explain the data to the public.

During the past year, we have made substantial progress on setting up an electronic reporting system. Through an IT committee and with the assistance of a consultant, we identified the secure website of the Mid-Atlantic Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network (MAGLOCLEN), part of the Regional Information Sharing System, as the best solution for setting up a secure portal to permit police departments to transmit their records electronically and securely. MAGLOCLEN now has agreed to both host the reporting portal and handle law enforcement authentication and password systems. Meanwhile, a working group of law enforcement partners and academics developed a use-of-force reporting form that will now be deployed for beta-testing by your police departments to determine if it is clear, easy to use, understandable, and not unduly burdensome. A copy of this reporting form is enclosed for your reference. At the same time, we are preparing to engage an established University-related entity to assist with various technical aspects of transmitting, storing, scrubbing and analyzing the data, and maintaining the system.

Over the next year, the Office of Public Integrity & Accountability (OPIA), in cooperation with our law enforcement and community stakeholders, will undergo a comprehensive evaluation of our use-of-force policy, which has not been updated since 2000. We will use the data we are collecting—along with community feedback, evolving best practices and the experiences of other law enforcement agencies in the United States and around the world—to inform any revised policy. Our goal is to make sure that our use-of-force policy gives police the guidance they need to effectively and fairly protect public safety while maintaining their own safety and the trust of the communities they serve.

Representatives from the Office of Public Integrity & Accountability (OPIA) will be following up in the near future to work with your departments to begin the beta-testing. We look forward to working with you on the pilot program as we build towards the full statewide rollout of the use-of-force portal.

Thank you again for your cooperation.