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August 24, 2026

The Honorable Michael V. Lee
North Carolina Senate, District 7
North Carolina General Assembly
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Repealing North Carolina's expansion of automated license-plate-reader (ALPR) surveillance

Dear Senator Lee:

We write on behalf of DeFlockILM and the 3,400 residents who have signed the petition to remove Flock automated license-plate-reader (ALPR) cameras from Wilmington and the Cape Fear region. Of those signers, 2,485 — three in every four — live in New Hanover, Brunswick, and Pender counties, and 1,984 live in New Hanover County alone. They are your constituents, and they are asking you to end your support for mass government surveillance.

On October 25, 2023, you voted for Senate Bill 409 — enacted as Session Law 2023-151 — the omnibus "Various Changes to Criminal and Civil Laws" that created North Carolina's highway plate-reader program. We recognize the surveillance provision was one part of a far larger bill, and we do not suggest you cast a vote on surveillance alone. That is precisely why we write now: in 2026 the program was made permanent, its record is in plain view, and your constituents are asking where you stand today. You represent the county at the center of this debate, and your leadership on it would matter more than most.

These cameras were deployed without public notice and without any meaningful opportunity for residents to be heard. Most people learned they were being tracked only after the network was already watching them. That is not how a free community consents to being surveilled, and our neighbors experience it as exactly what it is — a breach of trust.

They also believe it violates their constitutional rights. A network that photographs and logs every passing vehicle — every driver, every day, with no warrant and no suspicion

of wrongdoing — is a general search of the innocent. The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States protects against unreasonable searches, and Article I, Section 20 of the Constitution of North Carolina declares that general warrants "are dangerous to liberty and shall not be granted." A permanent, searchable record of where free people travel is the modern general warrant our State Constitution was written to forbid.

Our neighbors keep returning to one plain question: if we are not doing anything wrong, why are you watching us? These systems turn the presumption of innocence on its head. They treat every resident as a suspect to be logged first and cleared later — the opposite of the individualized suspicion that law enforcement is meant to require. A community is not a lineup.

This approach betrays the very trust that law enforcement is sworn to uphold — and the oath you took, as an elected official, to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of North Carolina. Public safety and constitutional liberty are not opposed. A government that watches everyone in order to catch anyone forfeits the consent it depends upon.

We ask you to support repealing the State's automated license-plate-reader right-of-way expansion, and to oppose any further expansion of government surveillance. And because North Carolina's legislative seats are on the ballot this November, we ask you to state your position publicly — to the voters, before they decide — on government mass surveillance and the warrantless use of automated license-plate-reader cameras. Your constituents are entitled to a clear answer.

The residents on our petition — and the neighbors still adding their names every day — are not asking for a promise that these cameras will be used carefully. They are asking you to reclaim a simple principle: free people are not a database to be searched. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss it.

Respectfully,

DeFlockILM
On behalf of 3,400 petition signers
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