

## **MINNESOTA COALITION ON GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER (ALPR) OVERVIEW**

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MNCOGI) has testified extensively about ALPR data during the 2015 legislative session, before both House and Senate committees alike.

If passed, ALPR legislation will constitute the first time that the Minnesota Legislature will have acted to regulate a mass-surveillance technology. Accordingly, it is important that ALPR legislation be crafted carefully and narrowly, and that it contain sufficient oversight of the government's actions.

MNCOGI supports the following principles to guide ALPR legislation:

### **MNCOGI supports a short retention period for "non-hit" ALPR data**

ALPR devices collect license plate data indiscriminately, by automatically scanning all vehicle plates that they pass. The resulting data contains both "hit" data (license plate data correlating to information logged in police databases, such as open warrants) and "non-hit" data (everything else.) "Non-hit" data constitutes the largest percentage of ALPR data, and it contains plate information, vehicle images, and the physical locations of vehicles that do not relate to information in police databases.

MNCOGI believes that "hit" data should be retained for as long as needed by law enforcement, as it is pertinent to ongoing law enforcement functions. However, MNCOGI seeks the quick destruction of "non-hit" data. Due to the fact that most "non-hit" data relates to persons who are not criminal suspects, MNCOGI believes that this data should be purged as quickly as possible. Minnesota should not begin a practice of collecting and warehousing data on the whereabouts of innocent civilians for long-term use by the government. Accordingly, the legislature should limit the retention of "non-hit" data. For comparison, HF 222 contains a 30-day retention period, as opposed to the longer retention periods offered in other bills introduced this session.

### **MNCOGI supports tight data access and sharing provisions**

Given the possibility that government entities might abuse large databases of information on the whereabouts of individual citizens, MNCOGI supports tight restrictions on the access and sharing of ALPR data. MNCOGI supports language in HF 222 that limits access and sharing of ALPR data to *specific* situations that are pertinent to *active* criminal investigations. MNCOGI also supports barriers to compiling ALPR data into large-scale public or private databases.

### **Effective oversight of ALPR programs is critical**

As the use of ALPR raises many accountability questions, MNCOGI feels that it is critical to ensure effective, independent oversight of ALPR program operation through independent audits. HF 222 calls for such audits on an annual basis.