

# State Announces Pilot Program for Police Body Cameras

*Solicits camera suppliers to participate in trial evaluation of the use of cameras to enhance public safety*

**Wilmington, DE** – Following an extensive evaluation by the Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) of the benefits and challenges of effectively implementing body cameras on law enforcement officers, Governor Markell and DSHS Secretary Lew Schiliro today announced plans for State and Municipal police officers to participate in a 30-45 day trial, using about a dozen body cameras throughout the state. The State has released a Request for Information (RFI) that asks camera manufacturers to submit proposals for how they would supply the state's needs to execute the pilot.

The pilot program follows a meeting between the Governor, Secretary Schiliro, Colonel McQueen, and representatives of the NAACP late last year, when participants agreed use of these cameras would be an inevitable and a positive step to support both law enforcement activities and the rights of Delaware citizens. However, they also emphasized the need to address a number of complex privacy, procedural, and technical issues to ensure successful deployment of the cameras.

"I am convinced that effective use of body cameras can both help police officers protect our citizens while strengthening trust between law enforcement and all of the communities they serve," said Governor Markell. "I thank Secretary Schiliro and everyone involved for all of their work that has brought us to this point and look forward to what the results of the pilot program will tell us about the best path forward for wide use of these cameras in Delaware."

"It is my hope that in working with all law enforcement

partners that we will be able to develop and implement a consistent statewide policy for the utilization, storage, and management of police body cameras,” said Schiliro. “Uniformity will greatly enhance the objective of this program to ensure the safety of our officers and the public we serve. Being able to conduct a statewide pilot program in Delaware will greatly improve the development of the technology and policy needed to be successful in the deployment of body worn cameras.”

“The Delaware State NAACP is excited about the pilot program initiated by Governor Markell,” said state NAACP president Richard “Mouse” Smith. “We are in agreement this is a necessary addition to our police departments for the protection of the police departments and the community. We are excited to hear the findings following the trial period. With possible funding from our legislature and Homeland Security, we will have grant funding to assist the police agencies throughout Delaware. We are looking forward to continuing the working relationship between the NAACP, the Governor’s Office, Homeland Security and the Delaware Police Departments in this endeavor because all lives matter to us.”

For the pilot, companies will be asked to provide 12 units to be deployed at the direction of DSHS as a part of the trial period for evaluation. This approach will allow the State to determine how best to craft requirements related to the procurement of body cameras and associated support equipment and services.

They must provide:

- Cameras capable of capturing real time activities of a law enforcement official that is worn on the enforcement official
- A system capable of retaining the images of real time activities captured by the body camera.
- An information technology platform allowing for storage of a data record in a manner that does not require the

State of Delaware to dedicate brick and mortar square footage to the retention of a data record.

The system must have cloud-based storage and be capable of providing coverage for the entire State, including law enforcement officials at the State, County, and City / Town levels.

“Conducting a body-worn camera pilot project will provide Delaware State Police with a great opportunity to evaluate the impact of body-worn cameras on Troopers and on the community,” said Col. Nate McQueen, head of the Delaware State Police. “It will also provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate the different types of technology, evidence management, data storage available and to finalize a uniformed body-worn camera policy. The pilot program will also enable Delaware state Police to determine how best to implement a permanent body-worn camera program.”

Chief William Bryson, Chairman of the Delaware Police Chiefs Council said he believes body cameras will be standard equipment for law enforcement officers in the foreseeable future.

“The financial commitment required to implement a comprehensive body camera program is currently beyond the reach of many police departments’ budgets,” he said. “Although, several departments in Delaware have introduced body cameras into their agencies including; Ocean View Police Department, Smyrna Police Department and the New Castle County Police Department. The Delaware Police Chiefs Council has been working with the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, the Attorney General’s Office, the Delaware State Troopers Association and the Fraternal Order of Police to establish a statewide body camera policy. A review of this program will provide valuable information for the implementation of the equipment and finalization of the policy.”

###