



# California POLICE CHIEFS *Association Inc.*

P.O. Box 255745 Sacramento, California 95865-5745 Telephone (916) 481-8000 FAX (916) 481-8008  
E-mail: [lmcgill@californiapolicechiefs.org](mailto:lmcgill@californiapolicechiefs.org) • Website: [californiapolicechiefs.org](http://californiapolicechiefs.org)

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December 21, 2009

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
1300 I Street  
PO Box 944255-2550  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Attorney General Brown:

The California Police Chiefs Association is the primary provider of front-line public safety services in California. Our members protect over 78% of Californians. We were in support of microstamping legislation authored by Assembly Member Mike Feuer in 2007. We continue to support the concept, but we are concerned that a hasty implementation could undermine its effectiveness. Currently, microstamping is slated to take effect in California on January 1, 2010.

It now appears, however, that statements about the capabilities of microstamping may have been technologically premature, and California is faced with trying to implement this patented, sole-sourced technology in a very difficult budgetary environment. Law enforcement budgets are already under intense scrutiny and pressure, and this will only cause a greater negative impact with little immediate impact on crime solving abilities.

The California Police Chiefs Association believes that any new technology that will assist law enforcement in the capture and successful prosecution of criminals—especially those that use firearms -- is a welcome addition, but there are too many unanswered questions with microstamping in its current iteration.

Accordingly, we support further research of microstamping in light of the new information that has surfaced since California passage of the legislation. Publicly available, peer-reviewed studies conducted by independent research organizations conclude that the technology does not function reliably and that criminals can remove the markings easily in mere seconds. We believe that these findings require examination prior to implementation.

We are not only joined in these concerns by the California Peace Officers' Association, but by the National Resource Council (NRC), as well. This organization has recently published a report on ballistics imaging and recommended further in-depth study of microstamping, noting specifically that "further studies are needed on the durability of microstamping marks under various firing conditions and their susceptibility to tampering..."

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Given these concerns, the California Police Chiefs Association supports an in-depth study on microstamping to evaluate its investigatory value.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan E. Manheimer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Susan E. Manheimer  
Acting President

CC: Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of the State of California  
George Anderson, Director, Attorney General's Division of Law Enforcement