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August 7, 2026

Members of the Cumberland Town Council
Town Hall
45 Broad Street
Cumberland, RI 02864

VIA MAIL AND EMAIL

Dear Town Councilors:

I am writing to raise deep concerns about your town's use of Flock Safety automated license plate readers (ALPRs) and to urge the Town Council to reconsider, and cancel, its contract with the company, as other municipalities have recently done. Indeed, based on documents that were recently brought to our attention, we believe that Cumberland has more reasons than most municipalities to halt the pervasive invasion of privacy generated by these surveillance devices.

Two years ago, as you know, the Town Council approved the purchase and installation of more than a dozen of these cameras in Cumberland. At the time, our organization sent a letter to the Council raising numerous concerns about this technology and its privacy implications. Even when limited to capturing only the license plates of passing vehicles, we noted that the data generated by this extensive surveillance network can reveal a tremendous amount of private information about a person.¹

However, based on a recently filed "unlawful arrest" lawsuit against the town, it appears that the Flock Safety cameras in Cumberland are doing much more than reading license plates. Specifically, according to the lawsuit, the police allegedly identified a suspect (falsely) by viewing *photos of the driver* that were taken by the cameras. This is not just the allegation of a self-interested plaintiff; this detail is taken directly from the narrative report of a Cumberland police officer who was involved in the plaintiff's false arrest.

For ease of reference, I have attached a copy of the officer's report. It specifically states the following: "Sergeant Correia was able to capyure [sic] a photo from the flock camera of [the plaintiff] driving the vehicle during the pursuit. The photo matches [her] license photo. In the flock photo there also appears to be a male in the passenger seat of the vehicle hiding to make it harder for him to be visible."²

¹ Time has also demonstrated the numerous ways these cameras can be, and have been, misused, with dozens of examples across the country of police officers using Flock Safety to stalk former romantic partners, share information with ICE, follow protesters, and in one highly publicized case, even track a Texas woman suspected of having an abortion.

² The report is attached as an exhibit to the federal lawsuit, *Pizzarelli v. Town of Cumberland*, 1:26-cv-00387.

These cameras are concerning enough when used just as license plate readers, but their danger is exponentially increased when expanded to take photos of people as well. Just as disturbing is the fact that no mention was made about this capability when the cameras were approved for purchase in 2024.

As more and more examples of Flock Safety's vast surveillance capabilities and their misuse have become known, many communities are reconsidering their use. In just the past month, as I'm sure you are aware, the Towns of South Kingstown, Narragansett, and Glocester have voted to cancel their contracts with Flock Safety after weighing the benefits and the costs of this intrusive technology. We believe it is more than appropriate for Cumberland to do the same.

In the meantime, we also believe the public has the right to know how this false arrest came about. That is, we believe the Council should advise residents about all the capabilities of the ALPRs being used in Cumberland; at what point the ALPRs began being used to also capture photos of drivers and passengers in vehicles; how often the cameras have been used for this purpose; and whether and when this previously unreported surveillance expansion beyond license plate data was ever shared publicly.

We would be happy to share our broader concerns about this technology in more detail with the Council, but we hope that you will take steps to extract the Town from its current arrangement with Flock Safety.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing back from you about it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Brown", with a stylized, flowing script.

Steven Brown
Executive Director

cc: Matthew Benson, Police Chief
Mayor Jeffrey Mutter

Enclosure

umberland Police Department

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NARRATIVE FOR PATROLMAN JACK S HALLORAN

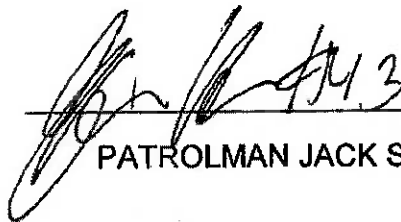
Ref: 25-533-OF

Entered: 03/26/2025 @ 1047 Entry ID: 0335
Modified: 03/26/2025 @ 1501 Modified ID: 0335

On Wednesday, 03/26/25 at approximately 1005 hours, while on patrol, I observed a gray Volkswagen Jetta bearing RI DV 4J570 traveling northbound on Broad St making a right turn onto Mill St. I observed the vehicle fail to use its turn signal when it turned on to Mill St from Broad St, and the vehicle registration sticker was located in the wrong location. I observed the operator to be a white female with red hair approximately forty years of age. I saw a clear view into the operators seat from my location on Meeting St which directly faces Broad St. I initiated the cruisers overhead lights and siren attempting to make a motor vehicle stop on Mill St by the intersection of Abbott St. The vehicle did not stop.

I advised dispatch I was attempting to stop the vehicle. I advised dispatch my speed, location, and vehicle description. I crossed into Attleboro and continued advising dispatch my location and speed. The vehicle was weaving in and out of the traffic lane passing vehicles in the opposite lane of travel. At approximately 1007 hours, dispatch advised me to terminate the attempted vehicle stop, which I did so instantly. I advised dispatch the last known direction was south bound on Washington St toward Pawtucket. During the pursuit, the vehicle failed to stop at multiple stop signs and traffic lights.

After termination of the pursuit I retraced the route the vehicle drove to determine the distance the pursuit lasted. I determined it lasted approximately 1.4 miles. Sergeant Correia was able to identify a female associated with the vehicle. Sergeant Correia showed me a photo of the female later identified as Eva Pizzarelli. I was able to identify Pizzarelli as the female I observed pass my location on Broad St. Sergeant Correia was able to capture a photo from the flock camera of Pizzarelli driving the vehicle during the pursuit. The photo matches Pizzarelli's license photo. In the flock photo there also appears to be a male in the passenger seat of the vehicle hiding to make it harder for him to be visible. Probable cause exist to charge Pizzarelli for Reckless Driving/Eluding Police 1st Offense (31-27-4) and multiple traffic infractions listed in the report.



PATROLMAN JACK S HALLORAN

BWC footage available: Yes