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NEWS RELEASE

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NJ Gov. Christie Whitman today issued the following statement regarding changes at the NJ State Police:

"I have directed Attorney General Peter Verniero and Chief Counsel John Farmer, Jr. to continue their search for a new Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police and have asked them to work to complete that search as quickly as possible.

"Our State Police have been on the front lines in the war to bring crime in New Jersey to a 25-year low. Their motivation is selfless. Their exclusive desire is to serve and protect the people of New Jersey. I want the next Superintendent to follow in that tradition and I want the next Superintendent to augment public confidence in the State Police.

"Unfortunately, the specter of racial profiling has had the effect of questioning the motivations of the State Police. I will not have their ability to fight crime compromised by the perception of racial profiling or insensitivity. It is not fair to the men and women of the State Police nor is it fair to the residents of our state who rely on them for safety and protection.

"Col. Williams is a decent man whose commitment to fighting crime is without question, but his comments yesterday were inflammatory and divisive at a time when diplomacy and sensitivity are required to preserve and enhance confidence in the State Police.

"In addition to the search for a new Superintendent, we are in the process of the most thorough review the state has ever undertaken of State Police practices and policies. The purpose of our review is simple -- to ensure that our State Police have at their disposal every tool they need to do their jobs, including the full support of the law abiding public in New Jersey," she said.