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December 21, 2005

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AG Harvey Announces Results of 13th Independent Monitoring Report on State Police

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TRENTON – Attorney General Peter C. Harvey announced today the results of the 13th Independent Monitors Report which, for a second consecutive reporting period, finds the State Police in 100 percent compliance with all requirements of a federal Consent Decree.

While observing “dramatic” and “remarkable” evidence of continued progress throughout the State Police organization, the new Monitoring Report makes particular note of a “major milestone” achieved over the past six months in the area of field operations. Specifically, the report lauds virtually error-free performance by State Police personnel in handling such field-operations-related tasks as consent searches, detentions and arrests.

The Monitoring Report makes clear that “no indications of racial profiling” were found in State Police traffic stops reviewed during the latest monitoring period. The report also refers to the consistently high caliber of work observed in field operations as “truly remarkable considering the complexity of the law enforcement processes under scrutiny.” Based on these findings, the report recommends that direct monitoring of State Police field operations be scaled back for the remainder of the Consent Decree. While the report advocates continued, same-level monitoring of such areas as field supervision, training, and management review processes, it notes that “there is little to be gained” by continuing to devote the same amount of monitoring activity to review of State Police traffic stop video tapes and other field operations indicators.

“The latest Independent Monitoring Report shows an extraordinary level of compliance with the Consent Decree – for a second straight monitoring phase. That is testimony not only to the hard work of the State Police organization, but the Office of State Police Affairs as well. Working collaboratively, the two agencies are setting a national standard for statewide policing practices,” said Attorney General Harvey. “I commend the State Police organization for having the resourcefulness, and the will, to implement historic change while maintaining its usual standard of excellence in protecting New Jerseyans.”

Filed today with the U.S. District Court in Trenton, the new Monitoring Report reflects information compiled during a six-month period spanning April 1, 2005 through September 30, 2005 by Independent Monitors Dr. James Ginger and Alberto Rivas. As part of their work, the monitors conducted a variety of on-site review activities. As was the case with the 12th Independent Monitors Report issued in July 2005, the latest report indicates that State Police motor vehicle stops reviewed by the monitoring team were “remarkably trouble-free,” and that the relatively few errors committed by road Troopers were caught by supervisors. Moreover, all of the errors were considered by the monitoring team to be “technical” in nature, not Constitutional, and therefore not substantially related to Consent Decree compliance.

“Our troopers have continued to effectively enforce the laws and protect public safety while allowing us to meet -- and even exceed -- the expectations of the federal monitors for the past year,” said State Police Superintendent Col. Rick

Fuentes. "We have set a baseline for performance that will keep us at the forefront of modern policing – a baseline on which we will continue to improve."

In addition to high marks for State Police field operations, the latest Monitoring Report includes recognition of continued "full compliance" with the Consent Decree regarding implementation and operation of the data system known as MAPPS (Management Awareness Personnel Performance System). Among other things, MAPPS enables State Police to isolate and evaluate the patrol and enforcement activities of individual troopers, individual stations, specific patrol shifts, etc. MAPPS can be used to review job performance by Troopers and supervisory personnel, to compare an individual's performance with the performance of others in the same work group, and to compare performance across work groups. MAPPS is currently used in trooper performance evaluations, and in such discipline-related activities as verbal counseling and Trooper retraining.

Regarding training, the new Monitoring Report praises the "focus, attention to detail, commitment of resources and results" achieved by the State Police Training Academy during the latest monitoring period. The report takes notice of improvements in "virtually all areas" of the State Police training function, but also notes that, in the upcoming 14th review period, the monitors expect to see more data regarding the impact of training in the field.

Regarding supervision, the Monitoring Report notes that State Police supervisors appear "fully engaged in the Consent Decree compliance process." Specifically, the report credits supervisors with being thorough in reviewing traffic stop video tapes, and consistently alert in observing minor departures from Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or other errors that require counseling, retraining or other corrective action. Based on available evidence, the monitors note, "State Police supervisory and management review processes are effective, engaged and supportive of improved policing processes."

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