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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Imposes Stay on MATRIX

Walker will assemble oversight committee to evaluate security and privacy issues

Today, Gov. Olene Walker announced she will impose a stay on Utah's participation in the Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange (MATRIX), a federal pilot program designed to share certain types of data for criminal investigation, accessible only by law enforcement.

"I have asked the Department of Public Safety to stay any information sharing until I have had an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the security and accessibility of this system," said Walker. "I will assemble an oversight committee, including legislators, to evaluate continued participation in the program."

Utah began discussions regarding the MATRIX Project following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. State agencies began participating in the federal pilot program and provided information to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), acting as a repository, in mid-December 2003. MATRIX enables law enforcement officials to access information that is already available more quickly and efficiently.

The information provided includes criminal history record information, motor vehicle title and registration information, driver license records, and Department of Corrections' offender records and images.

The FDLE currently has established a privacy committee to ensure compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations and to limit access only to qualified law enforcement personnel.

"My primary concern is the protection of personal privacy," Walker said. "I will ask the oversight committee to address this issue specifically."

MATRIX is approved and funded by the United States Department of Homeland Security.

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