



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Public Safety

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
James E. Cockrell

5700 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-1225
Main: 907.269.4542

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Mike Prax
Chairman, House Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 106
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Follow-up for House Bill 275 – Sexual Assault Examination Kit Tracking

Dear Chair Prax,

In follow-up to the hearing of House Bill (HB) 275 on March 12, 2024, before the House Health and Social Services Committee, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) would like to provide additional information in response to committee member questions related to victim DNA processing and the sexual assault examination kit processing prioritization.

In response to Chair Prax's question regarding prioritization, the DPS Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory (SCDL) generally works sexual assault examination kits in order of the oldest to newest. The SCDL does allow an exception to this workflow in the following situations:

- High public safety threat cases e.g. unknown suspect, need to get investigative information to law enforcement as soon as possible
- Sexual assault of a minor or similarly vulnerable victims
- Cases involving strangulation
- Cases which have an upcoming trial date or other pending court proceeding

In response to Representative Mina's question regarding victim DNA handling, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) is heavily regulated with extremely strict protocols about the types of samples that can be entered as listed in the [National DNA Index System \(NDIS\) Operational Procedures Manual — LE \(fbi.gov\)](#). Victim samples are not permitted in CODIS. Some states permit smaller, local databases to be collated that exist outside of CODIS and are not regulated in the same way.

The DPS SCDL has an elimination database as outlined in the SCDL's [Forensic Biology Administrative Manual](#). As listed on pages 35-37 of the manual, it addresses what records can be added, who has access to the database, how long records are retained, etc. Before a record is added, a consent form must be signed by the person whose DNA is being added to the database (enclosed).

The use of an elimination database, such as the one the DPS SCDL is using, is commonplace within the industry. The use of a quality assurance database with regard to adding DNA attributable to victims is considered abnormal to industry standards and unethical.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Purinton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a stylized "P".

Lisa Purinton
Director, Division of Statewide Services
Department of Public Safety

cc: Laura Stidolph, Legislative Director
James Cockrell, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety
David Kanaris, Forensic Science Laboratory Chief, Department of Public Safety