



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

July 28, 2017

Colonel Steven C. McCraw
Director
Texas Department of Public Safety
P.O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-4087

Dear Director McCraw:

I am writing to request that you retract your letter of July 20, 2017, which notified local law enforcement agencies of the need to charge a fee for use of the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) crime lab. DPS' crime lab is vital to the public safety of Texas. It provides expert analysis and testimony of physical evidence collected at crime scenes around the state. Under no circumstances will I allow the 13 crime labs that DPS operates across the state to be underfunded. However, I firmly believe it is premature to charge a fee at this time.

Although a fee is authorized by statute, a proper reading of Rider 58 does not mandate that DPS charge a fee for the use of its crime lab services. Rather, the rider appropriates the use of up to \$11.5 million in fees collected should DPS decide to charge a fee. The rider also appropriates nearly \$63 million in additional money for the operation of the crime lab. Those dollars are not contingent on charging a fee and ensure the crime lab will operate at full capacity well into the next biennium.

I also understand that, without the appropriated receipts, the Texas Legislature effectively appropriated DPS nearly \$12 million less for Fiscal Years 2018–2019 than for Fiscal Years 2016–2017. Whatever the Legislature's ultimate intent was for including Rider 58, I have no doubt that the Legislature did not intend to underfund DPS' crime lab. I am confident that they are as committed as I am to ensuring the crime lab continues to provide first-rate forensic analysis to law enforcement across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Greg" and "Abbott" being capitalized and prominent.

Greg Abbott
Governor