

Position on Draft 2027 Legislative Technology Language

City of Bend | Draft 2027 State Legislative Priorities and Principles | September 2026

“Support expanding allowed uses of responsible technologies that strengthen public safety and service delivery.”

Bend Privacy Alliance opposes this language.

Our concern is not hypothetical, and it is not an objection to technology in the abstract.

Bend has already invested in an increasingly interconnected public-safety technology system that includes body-worn cameras, in-car cameras with automated license plate recognition, Axon Evidence, Axon Records, automated transcription, real-time response software, the Fusus platform, drone software and streaming capabilities, and other integrated services.

The City’s own Axon purchasing records show how extensive that platform has become. Bend has purchased or licensed Axon Records, Respond Plus, FususONE, Auto-Transcribe, Evidence storage and automated tagging, drone licenses with advanced streaming and API integrations, and related services. Bend Police has also operated mobile Axon Fleet 3 license-plate readers since 2023.

These products should not be understood as isolated devices.

Axon itself markets its products as a connected ecosystem. Its current documentation describes Fusus as a platform capable of combining public and private cameras, body-worn cameras, fleet and ALPR systems, drones, location information, sensors and other data sources into a common operational picture. Information gathered in the field can move into Evidence, Records and other parts of the same ecosystem.

Bend’s recent experience demonstrates why the legal rules governing these systems matter as much as the hardware.

In 2025, federal immigration authorities made 279 queries of Bend’s Flock license-plate data in approximately three weeks. Bend subsequently shut off its four stationary Flock cameras. That episode showed that a surveillance system can be purchased for one public-safety purpose while access to the resulting data creates consequences far beyond the original local justification.

At the same time, Bend already operates Axon Fleet cameras with ALPR capability.

The distinction matters. A City does not necessarily have to purchase an entirely new surveillance system for surveillance capacity to expand. Existing cameras and software can acquire additional functions through licensing, configuration, integration, software development, data-sharing arrangements, or changes to the law governing what agencies are permitted to do.

Draft One shows how capabilities can expand

Bend Police has begun using Axon’s generative-AI report-writing system, which converts body-camera audio and transcripts into draft police narratives that officers review and submit. Axon describes Draft One as part of its broader ecosystem and as working with Axon Records. The technology therefore illustrates how information originally collected by a body camera can become the input for an entirely different governmental function: automated creation of an official police narrative.

This is precisely why the phrase “responsible technologies” is inadequate.

Whether a technology is responsible does not depend simply on what a vendor calls it or whether an agency believes it will improve efficiency. Responsibility depends on what information is collected, what can be inferred from it, how systems are combined, how long information is retained, who can search it, who can receive it, what automated decisions or reports can be produced from it, and what meaningful limits exist before deployment.

The patent record shows why policy must anticipate change

Axon patents describe capabilities involving automated license-plate recognition, multi-camera and cross-system interactions, real-time video and data integration, automated analysis, evidence processing and other functions that can operate across a connected public-safety ecosystem. A patent does not establish that Bend currently uses every capability Axon has developed or patented. That is not our claim.

The patents matter for a different reason: they demonstrate why public policy cannot be written around the capabilities of today’s configuration alone.

Technology platforms evolve.

Hardware already in the field can become the foundation for functions that did not exist, were not licensed, or were not publicly discussed when the original purchase was approved.

The proposed principle reverses the proper order

Against that factual background, the proposed legislative principle does something particularly consequential: it directs the City to support expanding allowed uses before identifying which technologies are involved, which legal restrictions should be changed, or what expansion the Council believes is appropriate.

That reverses the proper order of democratic oversight.

The public should first be told what authority is proposed, what technology would exercise it, what data would be affected, what harms are foreseeable, and what safeguards would apply. Only then should elected officials decide whether expansion is warranted.

Bend Privacy Alliance asks the City Council to:

1. Remove the sentence “Support expanding allowed uses of responsible technologies that strengthen public safety and service delivery.”

2. If Council wants to retain a technology principle, replace it with neutral language such as: “Evaluate proposed public-safety technologies individually, with consideration of necessity, effectiveness, privacy, civil rights, data security, fiscal impact, transparency, and meaningful public oversight.”

3. At minimum, state explicitly that this principle does not authorize City staff, contracted lobbyists, or City representatives to support legislation that would expand government surveillance, data-collection, data-sharing, biometric, artificial-intelligence, or other public-safety technology authorities. Advocacy for such legislation should require a separate affirmative vote of the City Council, taken after the specific legislation and its surveillance, privacy, and civil-rights implications have been publicly identified on a Council agenda and the public has been given an opportunity to comment.

This is not a theoretical concern about what technology might someday become.

Bend has already experienced the consequences of surveillance data reaching users and purposes beyond what many residents believed they were approving. Bend has already built much of the infrastructure for an interconnected public-safety technology platform. And the technology already purchased by the City is continuing to evolve.

Under those circumstances, “responsible technology” cannot be the safeguard.

The safeguards must be written into the policy.

Before Bend sends taxpayer-funded representatives to Salem with instructions to seek expanded technological authority, the Council and the public deserve to know exactly what authority Bend wants expanded, why it is necessary, what systems would use it, and where the limits will be.

Expansion should be the conclusion of that public process - not the starting instruction.