

**JOINT STATEMENT BY SLED CHIEF MARK KEEL AND
14TH CIRCUIT SOLICITOR DUFFIE STONE**

March 31, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In recent days, some media outlets have published unfounded and ill-informed speculation regarding the role of the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office in the investigation of the murders of Paul Murdaugh and his mother, Maggie Murdaugh. Per long-standing policies, SLED and the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office will not comment on specifics of any case while it is still under investigation. However, given the persistence of unsubstantiated assertions, both fairness and public confidence in the integrity of the process requires a limited response.

In the hours following the murders of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh on June 7, 2021, SLED notified 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office officials to inform them of what had transpired in Colleton County and to request their assistance in the investigation. SLED's notification and the Solicitor's Office's participation in investigations are routine in the 14th Circuit.

From the first hours of SLED's investigation, Chief Mark Keel was in direct and regular contact with both 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone and S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson. All agreed that should evidence emerge establishing a potential conflict, Chief Keel would contact Solicitor Stone and Attorney General Wilson immediately. Chief Keel did so, and Stone immediately recused himself from the case on August 11, 2021.

At the scene and in subsequent days, Solicitor's Office investigators acted solely under SLED's direction. At no time did the Solicitor's Office conduct a separate or parallel investigation, or act in any manner to undermine SLED's role as the lead investigative agency. On a related note, much has been made about media photographs taken at the scene on June 8th that depict Solicitor's Office investigators speaking with a member of the Murdaugh family. Not only was the depicted action undertaken at SLED's request, the photographs were taken after the crime scene had been processed and after SLED had cleared the Murdaugh family to return to the property. Other law-enforcement agencies, including SLED, were present at the time. Any speculation to the contrary is simply false.

Chief Keel has maintained from the outset that SLED will pursue justice for Maggie and Paul no matter where that leads, and SLED's resolve in that regard has not wavered.