



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Kathleen Allison
Secretary, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
1515 S Street, Ste. 502-S
Sacramento, CA 95811

Re: Announced plans to close California Correctional Center

Dear Governor Newsom and Secretary Allison,

We write to share our grave concerns about the recently announced plan to close the California Correctional Center in Susanville. While the 2020-21 state budget directed your department to close two prisons, the reasoning behind the choice remains hidden and there was a complete lack of legislative, community or employee input in this process. It is inappropriate for a decision with such profound effects on public safety and ramifications to the surrounding communities to be made in this secretive manner.

We have read the 2020 independent infrastructure report that found California Correctional Center was the highest priority for repairs and rehabilitation, in part because it had the highest “value factor” – the least expensive investment per prison bed. Closing the most cost-effective of the state’s older prisons while investing in even more expensive facilities is financially counterintuitive.

We’d further point to the Legislative Analyst’s Office’s Feb. 2, 2021, report on prison infrastructure spending, which stated that the administration should provide a list of prisons that are strong candidates for potential closure. The LAO report specifically mentioned four strong candidates for closure because of high estimated repair or operational costs relative to capacity. CCC was not on that list.

CCC is also one of two hubs for the state’s inmate fire program. This program provides inmates skilled training to help save lives and protect communities in the event of catastrophic wildfire, and also allows inmates to engage in conservation and prevention work in the winter. This closure has the potential to

inhibit the operation of this program at a critical time, as the state is poised to enter yet another record-breaking fire season.

The prison system does not exist to provide jobs, but the fact is the state has chosen to build most of its prisons in rural, disadvantaged communities, and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) is the dominant employer in many of them. Lassen County had 8,800 people working in March of 2021. More than 1,000 of those were directly employed at CCC. It is shameful for the state to wreck the economies of these rural communities without at least close communication, an opportunity for neighbors to make their case, and real planning for economic transition.

For these reasons, we request that CDCR immediately halt the planned closure and reconsider the decision in a more transparent process that allows stakeholders to be engaged in the decision-making process. The public deserves an accounting of the reasons for CDCR's choices and the alternatives considered. The many stakeholders involved, including neighboring communities and hard-working prison staff, deserve to have their voices heard.

We look forward to discussing a productive path forward with you directly. Our chiefs of staff can be reached at Josh.Cook@sen.ca.gov and Erik.Brahms@asm.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



BRIAN DAHLE
Senator, 1st District



MEGAN DAHLE
Assemblywoman, 1st District