



April 23, 2024

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The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
State of California Governor  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: CONDEMNED “DEATH ROW” INMATE TRANSFER PROGRAM TO CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR MEN IN CHINO**

Dear Governor Newsom,

The City of Chino Hills expresses profound concern over recent developments that the California Institute for Men (CIM), located in the neighboring city of Chino, has begun receiving transfers of condemned inmates from San Quentin Prison’s Death Row as early as February 2024. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s (CDCR) decision to transfer condemned inmates to CIM is rooted in Proposition 66, a voter-approved measure in 2016, which requires that condemned inmates be allowed to participate in prison programs, including prison jobs that would help them pay restitution to their victims. CDCR began phasing out the segregated death row cells and has instituted a Condemned Inmate Transfer Program to facilitate moving inmates to facilities that have an electrified fence, such as CIM.

The City of Chino Hills was only made aware of this news that raises serious safety concerns for residents, schools, and businesses of Chino Hills this week unfortunately not by CDCR nor CIM, but through my active role on the Citizens Advisory Committee, and collaborative relationship with the City of Chino.

I urge you to ensure the safety of our community by placing these individuals at appropriate facilities until the necessary maintenance, repairs, improvements, personnel, and procedures are in place at CIM. While we understand that CDCR is implementing the law, CDCR has a responsibility to protect the surrounding community first. CIM was not designed and is not in the condition required to house these dangerous inmates.

In a 2008 report issued by the Inspector General, it was stated that CIM has fallen into an unacceptable state of repair due to years of neglect and would require \$28 million annually to maintain the facility in its current "poor" condition. The report further warned that if funding is not dramatically increased, the condition of CIM will deteriorate to a level by 2014 that would necessitate its demolition and replacement. There is no indication that the state has allocated the necessary funding to improve the condition of CIM. Regretfully, the State and the CDCR continue to ignore the failing public safety and security concerns within the aging CIM.

The facility, and processes in place, are not in the condition to house these dangerous inmates who have committed heinous crimes, including killing a victim with an axe during a home invasion robbery, beating and torturing a woman to death, and beating and lighting a woman on fire in front of her children.

There were multiple murders of three of our residents in 1983 at the hands of CIM escapee Kevin Cooper, who remains on death row, still stands as the single largest criminal loss of life in our City. To this day, that tragic day reverberates throughout Chino Hills. The fact that one of the victim's family still resides in our community serves as a painful reminder of the profound impact that these violent crimes by condemned inmates can have on our neighborhood.

On January 14, 2018, a prisoner escaped from Facility D at CIM after being trapped in the razor wire for 20 minutes. The inmate freed himself and subsequently stole a security vehicle from a nearby warehouse and led officers on a high-speed chase. A "shaker" wire that would have alerted guards to the inmate climbing the fence had been defective for three years. The prisoner was able to escape from their housing unit, scale a barbed wire fence, scale another barbed wire fence, break into the dive shop building, put on a wetsuit, and scale another fence before finally scaling the perimeter fence and being hung up in the razor wire, between two manned guard towers, all without being detected. The inmate was able to freely move about the sprawling prison complex due to a lack of security, technology, staffing and lighting.

The Chino Hills City Council is working collaboratively with the Chino City Council, and County and State leaders to request that CDCR stops the transfer of condemned inmates to CIM effective immediately and remove the condemned inmates already in CIM's custody to house them in facilities that are capable of housing such violent offenders.

Until the facility can properly contain and supervise them, CIM should not be housing these condemned inmates.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Moran  
Mayor  
City of Chino Hills

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