



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JRTC, 100 W. RANDOLPH, SUITE 16-100
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601

PAT QUINN
GOVERNOR

November 12, 2009

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
c/o Mr. Phillip Carter
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Detainee Policy)
The Pentagon, Room 5C719
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
c/o Mr. Harley Lappin
Director, Bureau of Prisons
Room 654, Holc Bldg.
320 First Street, NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Secretary Gates and Attorney General Holder:

This is a letter following up on a brief discussion I had with President Obama last week when I was in Washington meeting with the Illinois Congressional delegation. I mentioned to him that Jerry Hebel, the Village President of Thomson, Illinois, wrote me last month suggesting that the Thomson Correctional Center, which has been virtually vacant for the last eight years, could be better utilized by the federal Bureau of Prisons, and I certainly agree.

After investing more than \$120 million to build this state-of-the-art, maximum-security prison, there definitely appears to be a much greater need for this on the federal level, as overcrowding has become a pressing issue. In his letter, President Hebel stressed his community is "open to any and all alternatives" for Thomson.

Built on 146 acres, Thomson is a Level 1, adult male, maximum-security prison with 1,600 cells and eight housing units. The facility is enclosed by a 12-foot exterior fence and 15-foot interior fence, which includes a dual sided electric stun fence. Currently, the Illinois Department of

Corrections is only using a very small portion of the facility, and there is no opening date in the foreseeable future for the main complex.

I understand that you are still considering other options, but the federal Bureau of Prisons would be hard pressed to find a similar facility with such extensive safety and security measures already in place anywhere else in America.

As plans are being formulated to potentially move federal prisoners and to locate a limited number of detainees in the United States, we stand ready to provide you with any assistance as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat Quinn
Governor

VILLAGE OF THOMSON

Phone: (815) 259-3905
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800 Main Street P.O. Box 244
Thomson, IL 61285-0244

Honorable Pat Quinn
Governor of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

The Village of Thomson in Carroll County would like to bring to your attention the dire economic plight of our town.

As you may be aware, we are home to the finest, state-of-the-art maximum security prison ever designed in the state of Illinois, and perhaps the entire nation. Unfortunately, this prison has remained virtually unused since its construction eight years ago.

As each fiscal year ends, our local legislators work on our behalf and our hopes are raised. As each new budget passes without funding to open the Thomson prison, our hopes are dashed.

Expecting the prison to open, the Village of Thomson borrowed 9.6 million dollars via a municipal bond to pay for construction of a new water treatment plant, water tower, infrastructure improvements, and equipment. Interest payments to service this debt are \$375,000 per year. But the prison has not opened.

Many local merchants and investors built and planned new businesses in anticipation of more people moving here. The Village again borrowed money to buy land for a new public park, grants were received to expand our library, and plans were designed for a new housing development. But the prison has not opened.

The Thomson public school did not receive a new influx of students from the families of prison employees. In 2005 we were forced to close our school and consolidate with two other schools in Carroll County. But the prison has not opened.

In the past eight years, we have held rallies, written petitions, and taken bus trips to Springfield to bring attention and gain support in the Illinois General Assembly. But the prison still has not opened.

We have the capacity to accommodate the excess population for both guards and prisoners in a safer environment for either a state or federal prison. If the Illinois Department of Corrections has no need for this facility, perhaps the federal government would be interested in locating a prison similar to the one in Marion.

After eight years of living in limbo, we are open to any and all alternatives. We hope we can begin immediate discussions with you and your offices so this valuable asset can start paying dividends for our city, our state or our country.

Thank you for your attention. You are welcome to visit anytime!

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerry Hebel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jerry Hebel, Village President