



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

MAR 18 2010

The Honorable Donald Manzullo
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Manzullo:

This responds to your letter to the President, dated November 30, 2009, expressing strong support for establishing a federal prison at the Thomson, Illinois Correctional Center. We agree with your assessment that the facility "is ideally suited to help the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons meet their growing demands for more prison capacity."

As you stated in your letter, Harley Lappin, Director of the Bureau of Prisons, has briefed you and other Members of the Illinois congressional delegation numerous times about the critical overcrowding problem in the federal prison system, including a particularly urgent need for "supermax" type bedspace. Director Lappin has also been working closely with local and state officials on the process of obtaining appraisals and meeting other federal and state requirements for the sale.

With respect to your suggestion to move forward on the acquisition regardless of whether detainees from Guantanamo are moved there, the President has directed the Department of Justice to acquire the facility to fulfill both the goals of reducing federal prison overcrowding and transferring a limited number of detainees out of Guantanamo. The Department has made clear, however, that it would be seeking to purchase the facility in Thomson even if detainees were not being considered for transfer there.

As you may know, the Department of Justice requested \$237 million in its Fiscal Year 2011 budget to acquire, activate, and operate the facility in Thomson. We appreciate your support for this request and look forward to working with you as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Weich".

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General