



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0547, Version: 1

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 07/03/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: City Manager's Office

SUBJECT:

VICE MAYOR STEINER'S REQUESTED LETTER OPPOSING THE TRANSFER OF DEATH ROW INMATES TO CHINO'S CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR MEN (CIM)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report asks the City Council to provide direction on a draft Letter of Opposition regarding the transfer of death row inmates from a state maximum-security prison to Chino's California Institute for Men (CIM). During its June 5, 2024 meeting, the City Council directed staff to draft a letter and bring it back to them for review.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council provide direction on a draft Letter of Opposition to Governor Newsom and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Secretary, Jeff Macomber, opposing the transfer of death row inmates from a State maximum-security prison to Chino's California Institute for Men (CIM), thus posing a public safety issue to the City of Chino and its neighboring cities.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

On May 16, 2024, Vice Mayor Steiner submitted a Future Agenda Item Request Form, asking staff to prepare a comment letter to Governor Newsom and Secretary Macomber, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, outlining the City's opposition and concerns about the State's decision to transfer death row inmates from a maximum-security prison to a facility located only 14 miles and a little over 20 minutes from the City of Corona. This action poses a potential risk and threat to the safety and well-being of City of Corona residents and surrounding communities. At its meeting on June 5, 2024, the City Council directed staff to draft a Letter of Opposition and bring it back to the City Council for review.

ANALYSIS:

Staff worked with the City's lobbyist, Renne Public Policy Group (RPPG), to draft the attached Opposition Letter. The letter is supported by the City's Legislative Platform, Section 7: Public Safety, and specifically within the following tenets:

- a.) Support efforts that increase public safety within the City.
- c.) Support efforts to protect the health and safety of law enforcement officers and firefighters.
- i.) Support legislation that would allow for effective law enforcement and oppose legislation that hampers that process.

Furthermore, the Opposition Letter appropriately highlights several concerns with the proposed transfer of the inmates. This includes:

- The heightened risk of escape from an aging facility like the CIM. Security breaches in an older facility significantly increase the likelihood of escape attempts, putting our community in grave danger.
- The number of aging death row inmates requiring medical care, which is often provided at local hospitals, increases the risk of escape during transport and treatment.

One of the city's priorities is ensuring that high-risk inmates remain in appropriate facilities, which is essential for maintaining public safety and preserving the quality of life. The draft Opposition Letter aims to have the Governor and CDCR Secretary consider exploring alternative solutions that do not compromise the safety of Corona citizens and surrounding communities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this request.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt under Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may substantially affect the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action seeks direction from the Council regarding distributing a letter and thus has no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

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REVIEWED BY: BRETT CHANNING, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - Draft Letter of Opposition
2. Exhibit 2 - Future Agenda Item Request