

MEMORANDUM



JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE

TO Members of the Joint Budget Committee
 FROM Steve Allen, JBC Staff (303-866-4961)
 DATE May 19, 2020
 SUBJECT Prison closure and bed reductions for the Department of Corrections

Following the presentation of comebacks by OSPB, staff engaged the Department of Corrections (DOC) in conversations about the feasibility of closing a correctional facility. The sharp drop of the state’s in-prison population, especially during March and April when the in-prison male population declined by 1,117 from 15,982 to 14,865 and the in-prison female population declined by 271 from 1,618 to 1,347, has left a number of beds empty and has raised the possibility that a facility closure might be possible. Staff suggested closure of Skyline Correctional Center, a male minimum security facility located in Canon City.

Skyline is one of the smallest prisons in state system, with an operational capacity of 252, of which 36 beds were empty at the end of April. It is located in the East Canon Complex, close to Fremont Correctional Facility, the south campus of Centennial Correctional Facility (“Centennial South”), and other prisons. Staff has long thought that it looks more like a rest home than a prison.

Prison closures in Canon City are among the least disruptive closures that can occur in Colorado’s correctional system. Corrections officers and other staff who are no longer needed at a closed facility in Canon City can be reassigned to another prison in the same area, with no need to relocate and with a commute that is little changed. Closure of a small prison when several nearby prisons remain open also has a minimal impact on the local economy. As a result, community opposition to the closure of Skyline is likely to be low.

DOC responded favorably to the staff inquiry, offering to close Skyline in mid-January, 2021. The Department also offered to reduce by 147 the number of bed in use at La Vista Correctional Facility, a female prison located on the campus of the Colorado Mental Health Institutes-Pueblo. The La Vista reductions begin on July 1 2020. The following tables show the appropriation reductions:

CLOSE SKYLINE CORRECTIONAL CENTER (CLOSING 1/15/2021)				
Long Bill line item	FY 2020-21		FY 2021-22	
	FTE	GF	FTE	GF
1A EDO - HLD		(\$230,630)		(\$615,012)
1A EDO - AED		(61,439)		(163,836)
1A EDO - SAED		(61,439)		(163,836)
1A EDO - STD		(1,814)		(4,836)
1A EDO - Shift		(30,821)		(82,188)
2B Maintenance Personal Services	(3.0)	(206,739)	(8.0)	(551,304)
2B Maintenance Operating		(25,002)		(54,591)
2C Housing & Security Personal Services	(11.6)	(761,278)	(31.0)	(2,030,076)
2C Housing & Security Operating		(7,268)		(15,869)
2D Food Service Personal Services	(1.5)	(105,386)	(4.0)	(281,028)
2D Food Service Operating		(123,056)		(268,682)
2G Superintendents Personal Services	(0.4)	(18,292)	(1.0)	(48,780)
2G Superintendents Operating		(7,932)		(17,319)
2I Case Management Personal Services	(1.1)	(91,296)	(3.0)	(245,136)
2I Case Management Operating		(725)		(1,584)

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CLOSE SKYLINE CORRECTIONAL CENTER (CLOSING 1/15/2021)				
Long Bill line item	FY 2020-21		FY 2021-22	
	FTE	GF	FTE	GF
2K Inmate Pay		(13,372)		(29,198)
3F Training Operating		(301)		(659)
4A Labor Personal Services	(0.4)	(21,676)	(1.0)	(57,804)
4B Education Personal Services	(0.4)	(17,244)	(1.0)	(45,984)
4C Recreation Personal Services	(1.5)	(103,923)	(4.0)	(277,128)
Total	(19.9)	(\$1,889,631)	(53.0)	(\$4,954,850)

REDUCE LA VISTA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY CAPACITY (REDUCING ON 7/1/2020)				
Long Bill line item	FY 2020-21		FY 2021-22	
	FTE	GF	FTE	GF
1A EDO - HLD		(\$72,667)		(\$79,271)
1A EDO - AED		(20,444)		(22,302)
1A EDO - SAED		(20,444)		(22,302)
1A EDO - STD		(694)		(758)
1C Inspector General Operating		(245)		(245)
2C Housing & Security Personal Services	(6.2)	(301,358)	(6.8)	(328,743)
2C Housing & Security Operating		(3,400)		(3,400)
2D Food Service Pueblo Campus		(172,514)		(172,514)
2I Case Management Personal Services	(0.9)	(52,575)	(1.0)	(57,353)
2I Case Management Operating		(500)		(500)
2J Mental Health Personal Services	(0.9)	(54,949)	(1.0)	(59,943)
2J Mental Health Operating		(500)		(500)
2K Inmate Pay		(28,733)		(28,733)
3D Communications Operating		(1,350)		(1,350)
3F Training Operating		(245)		(245)
3G Information Systems Operating		(1,960)		(1,960)
4B Education Personal Services	(0.9)	(55,552)	(1.0)	(60,601)
4B Education Operating		(500)		(500)
Total	(8.9)	(\$788,630)	(9.8)	(\$841,220)

Though the recent large decline of the in-prison population seems to imply that larger bed reductions are possible, staff recommends against this for two reasons:

- DOC is deliberately holding beds open as a COVID-19 infection-control measure. The Department has identified inmates who are at increased risk of serious complications if they contract COVID-19. These risk factors are age and certain other conditions such as diabetes. As much as possible, DOC is placing at-risk individuals in single rooms to increase the social distancing of those individuals from their fellow inmates. If an outbreak of COVID-19 occurs at a facility, DOC will lock the facility down, confining inmates to their rooms for much of the day and bringing them meals in their rooms until the threat passes. In some facilities, DOC has cells that were designed for single occupancy. In other cases, at-risk offenders are placed in double rooms without cell mates. DOC is also transporting inmates among facilities as little as possible in an effort to prevent the spread of infection within the system.
- It is far from certain that the current population reduction, which is clearly connected to the coronavirus pandemic, is permanent.

Staff recommends that the Committee approve these reductions.