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April 15, 2020

Michael Carvajal  
Director  
United States Bureau of Prisons  
320 1st St NW  
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Carvajal:

As you are aware, as a result of devastating storms affecting the coastal Carolina region on April 13, 2020, FCI Estill sustained significant damage that left the facility unsecure and necessitated the movement of approximately 958 inmates to USP Lewisburg. We are writing today to express our concern regarding staffing levels at USP Lewisburg and potential stress to our local health care system considering the movement of these inmates. We request that the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) take the steps outlined in this letter to protect the safety of inmates and staff at USP Lewisburg.

Given that USP Lewisburg's maximum bed space is 1,831 and there are 542 inmates currently at the facility, the movement of these 958 inmates to USP Lewisburg would increase the prison's filled capacity to about 82 percent from its current level of 30 percent. This rapid increase in USP Lewisburg's inmate population will create challenges for the prison's staff who have been operating with a significantly smaller inmate population for several years. The added stress brought on by the new inmates will be compounded by the fact that more than 30 staff members from USP Lewisburg have been deployed to BOP facilities in Ohio and New York ravaged by COVID-19.

Moreover, local hospitals and elected officials serving the region around USP Lewisburg have expressed concern directly to the BOP that an outbreak in the prison population has the potential to increase the risk of infection to the community at-large and severely tax the resources of the healthcare providers in the region.

To protect the safety of USP Lewisburg's staff and the local community, and to ensure their ability to handle this large and unexpected influx of inmates, we request that BOP take the following measures:

1. Immediately recall the more than 30 staff members deployed from USP Lewisburg and begin the process of quarantining and screening them for COVID-19. The quicker these staff members are ready to assist staff at USP Lewisburg, the better.

2. Deploy available BOP Secondary Law Enforcement from regional offices, the central office, and BOP training centers to USP Lewisburg. Currently, approximately 50 percent of reservation housing is available at USP Lewisburg for staff members at minimal cost.
3. Develop a plan to deploy FCI Estill staff to USP Lewisburg or BOP facilities where USP Lewisburg staff members have been deployed and recalled to help alleviate staffing burdens.
4. Set up a field hospital at USP Lewisburg, including medical professionals and any necessary health care resources, that would allow BOP to care for sick inmates on site rather than transport them to local hospitals, which lack the capacity to deal with large-scale outbreaks in the community and the prison.

We request a response in writing to the concerns raised in this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices at (570) 322-3961 and (570) 871-6370 with any questions.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Fred Keller  
Member of Congress



Daniel P. Meuser  
Member of Congress