



OREGON AFSCME

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Mr. Max Williams
Director, Department of Corrections

Dec. 7, 2009

Dear Mr. Williams,

We have carefully reviewed the proposed cuts from the Department if Measures 66-67 are not passed in January. While it may appear similar or identical to exercises we have seen in the past, we fear that in this economic climate it presents a threat that outstrips those we all have weathered in the past. Your employees and Oregon AFSCME Council 75 have many concerns and questions regarding these cuts as proposed.

1. We find that there seems to be a disproportionate dependence on shutting institutions and eliminating line staff without proportionate cuts in administration.
2. We have significant concerns about the proposed release of over 3500 inmates into our communities with little or no advance notice.
3. We are dismayed over your plan to have \$5.5 million in cuts in community corrections at the county levels for each 5 percent reduction in your budget while releasing these inmates into the communities. After the application of those cuts, your plan then simultaneously provides a more than double increase in funding to handle the influx of additional offenders to the counties, which makes no sense. Why would DOC cut \$5.5 million from the counties and then add \$13.7 million followed by the possibility of another 5 percent cut of \$5.5 million and then adding another \$11.6 million? Regardless of the financial deductions and additions in your plan, we are significantly worried that this will still result in dangerous and predatory felons in neighborhoods across Oregon with little or no supervision, controls or accountability.
4. It is our understanding that under current law neither the Director nor the Department has "release" authority. How do you envision the release of 3,500+ inmates will be accomplished and how it will be determined who is to be released and when?
5. What will be the victim and community notification process for this proposed release? Who will be charged with the oversight and accountability for the release of inmates?

6. Who, besides the offenders, will be liable for any new crimes or parole violations and revocations?
7. In our review of your plan we are having difficulty understanding why the top and mid-level management positions in the Dome Building and elsewhere go virtually untouched when there will be nine fewer prisons, 3,500 fewer inmates and over 850 fewer staff and virtually no community or institutional programs. What exactly will the management team be responsible for and to whom?
8. What specific justifications were considered in this plan to apparently exempt management personnel and operations, in contrast to mothballing nine prisons, releasing 3,500+ inmates and terminating nearly 900 front line staff?

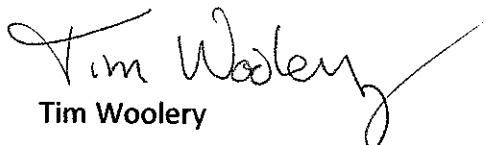
We are painfully aware of the implications to the state budget should the campaign for Measures 66-67 fail. This is why we are making a significant commitment of time, money and other resources to the campaign and we have made this the top priority for all staff, political and field. Regardless of the outcome we believe that there will likely be wide support for the restructuring of state and local governments, a reordering of service priorities and a reexamination of how those services are delivered. We cannot see a scenario where the Legislature will approve the proposal as it stands now, nor will they close nine prisons, release 3,500+ inmates and terminate nearly 900 staff members and constituents. Therefore, this sort of proposal is damaging to both the agency and our credibility as the professionals who work with state government representatives and will damage the public effectiveness of the campaign. When messages are so overstated that the public and employees either become fearful or may feel they are unbelievable, the message can in turn become prophetically and absolutely unbelievable. We understand your need to propose closures as part of a reduction of this size but these proposals are over the top and need to be put in more measured terms.

The message we hear from nearly every other agency has been, "NO, we can't do our job under these budgets." However the message we hear delivered by ODOC, session after session, budget cut after budget cut by the Department has been the proverbial good soldier's rapt response, "We'll manage; we can do it with less." When this is followed a short while later, abruptly moving to a message of closing nine prisons, releasing 3,500+ inmates and terminating nearly 900 staff the entire statement fails to be believable by legislators and certainly by the voters. The perspective of our members working in the prisons and in the field for the ODOC is "No, we can't do it now; and we have balanced as much as we can on our backs." There is no more they can do for less when in fact they are struggling to do it now. They need to know that someone somewhere has *their* backs.

While this letter may seem harsh, you should be assured that it is toned down from the message our members are giving to us in the field. We would suggest work groups similar to the recent collaborative work done on Measures 59 & 61 of labor and management in each work area across the department to examine the budgets for their respective areas and a process for which these groups can suggest alternatives and new ideas for budget realignments. We know that soda pop by itself can not balance the budget, nor will fuel economies, but perhaps some of these ideas should be taken in and weighed for their due merit rather than dismissed out of hand as ludicrous. We feel that there has not been any real conversation and give-and-take with the individuals who work on the ground as to how the department can save funds long and short term. Our members, your staff, have been treated more as pawns or victims of the problems rather than partners in a solution. We want to be partners in solutions. We also want to be assured that our members' money is spent well on this campaign, that the messages delivered are accurate and believable and that when all is said and done that the ODOC is run better, more efficiently and with more dignity and respect for the staff working in the prison system.

We are always willing to work with the ODOC and the state to develop real solutions. We look forward to hearing back regarding our questions, concerns and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim Woolery". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Tim Woolery
Corrections Coordinator, Staff Representative
Oregon AFSCME Council 75