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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
300 7th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Todd Lyons  
Acting Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C., 20536

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons,

I write to share my strong opposition to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) plans to convert the 800,000 square foot warehouse at 10900 Hopewell Road in Williamsport, Maryland into a large-scale detention facility for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As the Representative for Maryland's Sixth Congressional District, I also write to voice the serious concerns of thousands of my constituents who have been improperly denied a reasonable and meaningful opportunity to provide public comments at the local and federal levels.

As my colleagues and I from Maryland's Congressional Delegation shared in our joint letter, we stand united in our staunch objection to this project. I conducted an oversight tour of ICE's Baltimore Enforcement and Removal Operations office on January 30, and what I saw was disgraceful. Dozens of detained noncitizens were crowded in small spaces without showers or private bathroom facilities. Further, individuals held in Baltimore are reportedly often denied access to medical care, attorneys, and family visitation. The disregard for the humane treatment of people, regardless of their immigration status, that I saw in Baltimore has no place in the United States, and certainly not in the communities that I represent.

Based on what I have personally seen in Baltimore and with my colleagues when we brought a Congressional delegation to Minneapolis, I know that facilities of this type do not reflect our American values. We have seen ICE operate with blatant disregard for humane conditions in detention facilities, violate individual rights, and deny due process, showing a clear pattern of systemic abuse. We must ensure that *every* human's dignity and rights are respected in the civil process – not criminal – of immigration enforcement.

Last month, the Washington County Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution that voiced its "unwavering support" for DHS and ICE, after the warehouse detention project came to light. The Board did not accept public comments prior to voting on the resolution, despite more than 100 community members who protested inside and outside of the Board's chambers. My colleagues and I urged the Commissioners to provide our shared constituents the opportunity to

express their concerns with their resolution, but they closed the door, both literally and figuratively, to the residents of Washington County.

By opening this public comment period regarding the project's environmental impacts on February 27th and closing it on March 5th, the Department gave my constituents less than a week to prepare and submit their views. Their opinions matter. This process has demonstrated a clear intent to ignore and silence the wishes of our community.

In lieu of the Administration's failure to provide an honest public comment period, I have actively solicited comments from my community to ensure community input for this project is captured. On February 3rd, my office sent an electronic survey to constituents, seeking their views on the Department's planned warehouse detention center. The survey was promoted through my weekly newsletter, text messages, social media posts, and local media sources to ensure broad community participation. By February 28th, I received 4,893 responses, with an overwhelming majority, 82 percent (4,209 respondents), expressing opposition to this facility.

The survey also included an optional comment section for my constituents to share their thoughts. 84 percent of respondents submitted their thoughts, and of those, 85 percent voiced their opposition. Due to the Department's shockingly short comment period, I want to share some of their responses in the following pages.

The comments below are representative of the 4,111 comments provided by my constituents. Identities of the individuals who provided the comments have been made anonymous to protect the identity of my constituents.

***A resident from Hagerstown is concerned about human rights, public health and community safety:***

*"I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed ICE detention facility in Hagerstown, Maryland. As a constituent, I am deeply concerned about the harm such a facility would cause to individuals, families, and the broader community. Detention centers are associated with significant human rights concerns, including inadequate medical and mental health care, family separation, and conditions that undermine dignity and due process.*

*From a public health and community safety perspective, detention facilities do not make our communities safer. Instead, they place additional strain on local resources, exacerbate trauma for detained individuals and their families, and disproportionately impact immigrant communities who already face barriers to accessing care, legal representation, and social support. As a mental health professional, I am especially concerned about the well-documented psychological harm caused by detention, including increased rates of anxiety, depression, and trauma-related symptoms.*

*I urge you to oppose the development of this facility and to advocate instead for humane, community-based alternatives that respect human rights, keep families together, and invest in services that strengthen our communities. Maryland has an opportunity to lead with compassion, evidence-based policy, and a commitment to justice. I ask that you stand with your constituents in rejecting this proposal and supporting approaches that reflect our shared values."*

***A resident from Germantown is concerned about pressures on local utilities, emergency services, and infrastructure:***

*"To quote a line from a movie - 'If you build it, they will come'. The more detention space ICE has available, the more people they will detain.*

*Experience elsewhere, most notably recently in Minnesota, has shown that ICE will not limit its detentions to 'the worst of the worst' criminals who do not have legal authorization to be in this country; increasing numbers of United States citizens are being detained by ICE, as well as others, including children, who are no danger to our society at large and had been in compliance with or making reasonable attempts to comply with our laws.*

*I also note that a 1500-bed facility plus the number of people needed to staff such an institution would place huge demands on local infrastructure - I suspect that Williamsport and Washington County would be hard-pressed to provide sewer, water, roadways, hospitals, traffic and other law enforcement personnel, emergency services, and other resources required for such a large undertaking. While federal funding could possibly cover some needs, expansion of the necessary infrastructure takes time and may not be possible at all at the proposed location.*

*Nothing I have seen in the past year indicates that ICE or the current administration would act deliberately or judiciously to consider the impact on the surrounding communities. I strongly suspect they want to open a huge facility within months - not the years needed to avoid or minimize the immense problems the proposed 1500-bed center would present."*

***A resident from Hagerstown is concerned about the lack of public input, zoning concerns, and a lack of adequate infrastructure:***

*"I live less than a mile from the site of this proposed facility. I am very concerned about the impacts on our local community, primarily the institutionalization of a climate of fear and the inhumane treatment of detainees. The moniker used is a "processing facility," which is reminiscent of the words Nazi Germany used for its concentration camps.*

*The County Bd[Board] of Commissioners has a hands-off attitude and basically says they can't do anything, which is false. They could enact a formal resolution in opposition, which is a 10th Amendment right. Further, they have not held any public meetings to obtain feedback from directly affected community members. The area is not zoned residential and there will [be] extensive infrastructure (including water, sewer, and road access costs)—which would be funded with OUR tax dollars.*

*The facility will negatively impact our home values and the remaining beauty of our county. It would be a lasting blight to Maryland, and to our country. I have no idea if the County Board has been working directly with DHS/ICE—I suspect it has given their attitudes. I am disgusted and appalled by the swift, in-the-dark nature of this sale and the lack of concern on the part of Washington County officials, who are supposed to represent their constituents. I think most residents here are opposed to this facility."*

***A resident from Hagerstown is concerned that this warehouse was not built for this purpose, and that no environmental impact studies have been conducted:***

*“I vehemently oppose the proposed ‘detention facility’ site in Williamsport, MD. I live less than 4 miles from the facility. This warehouse is not fit to house human beings and was not built for this purpose. All humans have rights and are supposed to be guaranteed due process.*

*This facility is in a residential area with an elementary school 1.2 miles away and a gymnastics facility .8 miles from this facility. There are family homes directly across the street. There is a historic farm adjacent to the site. This area had been plagued with water and sewer issues. How will this facility affect this and wildlife in the area? There have been no environmental impact studies, there has been no concern for the welfare of the community surrounding the site and I feel the current administration has no concern or value of human rights and I do not want tax dollars aiding in the mistreatment of humans.*

*We the people, who are directly impacted by this proposed facility have had no say in the matter. The 5 county commissioners attempted to slide this through without public approval or concern for the citizens that are immediately and irrevocably affected by this.”*

***A resident from Sharpsburg opposes this facility due to ICE terrorizing communities and the lack of Congressional oversight:***

*“I am vehemently opposed to an ICE Concentration facility in Washington County Maryland. I am opposed to human beings being incarcerated in deplorable conditions without due process. I am opposed to any ‘containment’ facility that does not allow our representatives to check on the conditions of the human beings being detained at will. Quite frankly I am opposed to humans being determined this way at all. These thugs that are called ICE agents are nothing more than lawless, untrained racists that enjoy terrorizing and brutalizing human beings. I don't want them in my county, my state or my country. I certainly do not want my tax dollars to fund the brutalization of human beings.”*

***A resident who works adjacent to the purchased ICE warehouse, is concerned about allocation of taxpayer funds:***

*“You just visited the warehouse where I work and right behind it is the detention facility. It blows my mind every time I see it. We’re told this country ‘can’t afford’ to help the poor, the middle class, our schools, or our healthcare system. But we somehow have billions to lock up human beings for crossing an invisible line in the dirt on the same floating rock we all live on.*

*People have been fed the lie that undocumented immigrants are stealing jobs or living off taxpayers. That story falls apart immediately. They’re not taking anyone’s job—they’re doing the jobs no one else wants, for low wages, with no benefits, no insurance, and no healthcare. They pay taxes every time they buy anything, pumping billions into the economy while doing work most Americans refuse to do. What’s wild is that the anger is aimed at the workers instead of the American companies that hire them to cut costs. Also, IF law enforcement aids ICE in any way, I feel they should automatically lose their employment.”*

***A resident from Williamsport worries about community safety, insufficient infrastructure, and ICE’s lack of transparency:***

*“This facility is expected to hold 1500 detainees- over half the population of the town of Williamsport. These detainees are supposedly the 'worst of the worst". They will be held in a building that was neither designed nor built to be a prison. These so-called "criminals" will be located less than a quarter mile from 2 daycare facilities, and less than 3 miles from Williamsport schools. This puts our children in unnecessary danger.*

*This facility will affect the property values of homes and businesses in the surrounding area. Our tax dollars will end up being spent to improve the water and sewer services to this building because the current infrastructure will not be sufficient. \$500,000 has already been earmarked for improvements to Wright Road which runs next to the property. Our emergency services and local hospital will be over extended. Taxpayers will suffer the consequences. Records show the loss of this building will create a several million dollar tax deficit. It will be taxpayers who make up the difference.*

*Those of us against this warehouse prison are not only up against DHS and ICE, we are up against our own county government. We can't even express our opposition because somehow they get away with not allowing citizen participation at county commission meetings. When citizens who were allowed into a recent meeting voiced their concerns, the room was cleared and a closed meeting was held. They claim to have known nothing about the sale of this warehouse. They claim to have known nothing in advance about the proposed ICE prison. They signed a proclamation to support ICE and DHS. The whole situation is suspicious.*

*Williamsport has always been known as the historic town on the C&O Canal that was once considered by George Washington for the U.S. Capital. We do not want to become the town that is known for sitting in the shadow of a makeshift ICE prison.”*

***A resident from Frederick is concerned about the shroud of secrecy surrounding DHS's purchase of the warehouse and and ICE's inhumane treatment of detainees:***  
*“The building was bought in secrecy, without congressional oversight or public input, using over \$100M in taxpayer dollars. This type of action should not occur in a democracy! Current leadership that oversees ICE is incompetent, corrupt, and untrustworthy. Kristi Noem needs to be removed from her position and held accountable for her actions, which trickle down to ICE agents. Stories and scenes from other ICE detention facilities show inhumane treatment of the people being held there. I have no confidence that every single person detained is in our country illegally and is a criminal and/or danger to our society.”*

***A resident of Funkstown has concerns about inadequate infrastructure demands and violation of local zoning restrictions:***  
*“First, the property at 16220 Wright Road, Williamsport, MD 21795, is in a split-zoned area, with most of the area designated for primary warehouse use (IG). Under traditional legal requirements, the developer would be required to appeal any changes and would most likely fail, given the large deviation from the initial intent. I understand that because the federal government is considering this site, it may not be subject to local IG or RT zoning restrictions under the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Washington County officials have publicly stated that their 'hands are tied' regarding local zoning enforcement if a federal agency proceeds with the purchase and use of the property.*

*As a citizen, I am raising my voice against the exercise of federal authority in this manner. I believe concepts such as the Supremacy Clause were intended to remove obstacles to progress and development for the common good. This project is contrary to the best interests of our county and its citizens, and the process that led to this need is at best questionable and possibly unconstitutional. As an elected representative, please passionately oppose this project.*

*Second, I question whether the infrastructure exists to support a detention center with a volume of semi-permanent occupants. This will increase demand for already undersupplied services and infrastructure and will most likely require a major investment in taxpayer funds from the County, State, or both.*

*Third, I am familiar with a recent request by a Church to access Hagerstown Public Water. This request was initially declined, with an appeal offered on the condition that the Church pays all necessary infrastructure expenses to extend the existing public water service less than three-quarters of a mile. 45 days later, this offer was rescinded, with the justification that 'the site is just outside the MGA, the Major Growth Area, of the city, but within the UGA, the Ultimate Growth Area.' Research suggests that this proposed detention center has the identical characteristics – 'outside of Hagerstown City Limits and the Medium Range Growth Area and within the City's defined Urban Growth Area.' It is widely recognized that Hagerstown lacks sufficient resources to meet current and near-term demands of its existing water system. My question: how can one project with minimal demand be declined, while another with significantly greater demand and the probable requirement of county funds be approved?"*

***A resident from Sabillasville is concerned about the improper public comment process, lack of transparency, and environmental impact :***

*"The 'Early Notice' was posted on a DHS website on February 25, 2025. It has never been posted in the Federal Register, which is the publication that is routinely used for notifying the public that a federal agency is seeking comments. The website on which the Notice was posted is not actively managed because of the shutdown, according to a Header on the notice, so the public has no opportunity to get more information before commenting. I learned that the Notice existed solely by means of social media, which is not an adequate means to ensure that members of the public learn of the existence of the notice. The deadline for public comments is March 5, which means that members of the public have insufficient time to investigate the situation and compose responses, especially since the public had no reason to look for a notice on an unmanaged website.*

*ICE misleads the public by identifying Hagerstown as the location of the facility, when in fact the location is Williamsport, and by indicating that it is going to 'acquire' the property, when, in fact, DHS already holds title to the property. The Notice describes the property as having been 'previously developed.' It fails to explain that the previous development was exclusively for use as an unoccupied warehouse. The site has never been used as a location for human habitation. Accordingly, it lacks infrastructure that affect water and sewage uses, including bathrooms, sewer facilities, clean drinking water, and kitchens. Adding these uses may or may not have an impact on floodplain management.*

*As the Notice states, the only engineering investigation which has been performed is 'preliminary.' A final engineering investigation which takes into account the many*

*changes required to make the facility inhabitable by hundreds of detainees and staff could, and probably will, come to different conclusions about the impact of the facility on the floodplain. The Notice indicates that sewer work will be required and that ICE “would comply with applicable Washington County floodplain management and permitting requirements,” but it does not indicate that Washington County has been consulted or that ICE is aware of what will be required for compliance. It also indicates that localized ground disturbance will be limited and that the surfaces will be restored to the current status quo, including with respect to utility tie-ins. How that is possible when a building changes from a storage facility to a place where hundreds of people will be using the building 24 hours a day is not explained. For example, the Notice provides no explanation of how the required increased water provision and sewage capacity could possibly have no impact on the utilities that service the building.*

*ICE concludes that the Proposed Action would not affect the floodplain hydrology or increase flood risk on or off the site. No information is provided, however, that explains how ICE comes to that conclusion or what a final engineering report would conclude once it is conducted. ICE indicates that three alternative sites were examined and found wanting in comparison with the Williamsport site. The Notice does not, however, indicate that any public input was solicited about any of the alternative sites. It also does not indicate that ICE let the public know that it was seeking to acquire a site that would be suitable as a Detention Center, so it is completely unknown whether other sites were available for purchase or lease.*

*I look forward to ICE giving the public an opportunity to comment with a Notice that is accurate, adequate, complete and published in the normal manner. I also look forward to ICE giving the public more than a minimum number of days to provide feedback. In the meantime, ICE should not proceed with any plans for using the site for detaining humans.”*

I urge you to extend this comment period to give **all** my constituents a reasonable say in this project that would unquestionably impact the environment, strain public health and safety resources, and erode the moral fabric of our community.

Sincerely,



April McClain Delaney  
Member of Congress