

**Jim Doyle**  
Governor

**Rick Raemisch**  
Secretary



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Corrections**

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October 16, 2007

Sheriff Brad Gehring  
410 S Walnut St  
Appleton, Wisconsin 54911

Dear Sheriff Gehring:

On behalf of the Department of Corrections, I would like to express my deep gratitude to you as a valued partner in providing jail beds under contract for our prison system. Not only have you helped our agency effectively manage a growing inmate population and maintain security in our crowded institutions, you also have seized an opportunity to supplement your budget with additional state revenues that the contracts provide. In fiscal 2007 alone, Sheriffs brought in close to \$10.8 million in revenues from these contracts, helping to fund their individual operating costs and alleviating the burden on county taxpayers.

As you undoubtedly are aware, the state Legislature has failed to pass a budget for the 2007-09 biennium, which began over 100 days ago on July 1, 2007. We had hoped that the compromise budget bill that Governor Doyle proposed last week would be approved, but the Assembly this week rejected the compromise. As I have stated publicly many times in recent weeks, without a new budget the DOC faces a \$374 million shortfall for 2007-09, which creates serious ramifications not just for our agency, but for the many partners with whom we have built strong relationships over the years.

The DOC continues to operate under 2005-07 appropriations, which provide less than one-fifth of the \$25 million that the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee approved for 2007-09 jail bed contracting. Since July 1, we already have incurred more than \$3 million in jail bed contract costs, and we easily expect to expend our \$4.5 million appropriation before the end of calendar year 2007. As a result, please regard this letter as notification that if current funding levels continue, we will remove state inmates from county jails starting in December 2007, and we do not expect to renew contracts for county jail beds for calendar year 2008. I have directed our Division of Adult Institutions to determine how facilities will absorb the more than 600 inmates who currently are housed in county jails without putting the security of our prisons in immediate jeopardy. Currently, we are studying where we can convert dayrooms, programming areas and other space into housing without adding staff, with transfers slated to begin in December 2007. We will notify each Sheriff of our timetable as the planning continues in the coming weeks, and we will work closely with law enforcement agencies in the jurisdictions where our prisons are located to ensure they are prepared for the obvious risks this influx of inmates will pose on community safety.

Please understand that we do not take these steps lightly. The safety and security of our prisons is a top priority in the DOC, and a major component is to ensure our inmate population is held at certain levels in each institution. We have been able to carry out this mission in large part through our partnerships with Sheriffs to house our inmates in county jails. Even as we plan for this transition, we remain hopeful that the Legislature will reach a compromise before our contract appropriations run out. I urge you to contact your representatives in the Legislature and encourage them to reach a compromise on a budget immediately.

Again, thank you for your contributions to the safety and security of our prison system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Raemisch".

Rick Raemisch  
Secretary