



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0523**

October 4, 2019

The Honorable William Barr  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dr. Kathleen Hawk Sawyer  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Prisons  
320 First Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Attorney General Barr and Director Sawyer:

I write to respectfully request an immediate suspension of any activities related to the deactivation of the Taft Correctional Institution (TCI) until a comprehensive briefing is held with all parties involved to ascertain the reasons and supporting documentation that would necessitate the Federal Bureau of Prison (BOP) taking such an extraordinary action.

On Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, the BOP issued a notification, with no advance warning, to deactivate the TCI and has subsequently proposed an aggressive schedule to ramp down operations by removing all inmates from this prison by January 17, 2020. However, after meetings, conference calls, and onsite visits by my staff over the past three days, BOP regional staff and BOP staff onsite at the TCI do not have detailed information as to why the BOP made this determination, and the BOP headquarters staff has so far refused to provide me a full accounting of the justification for this decision and supporting materials.

While maintaining the safety and well-being of corrections staff and inmates is the upmost priority, it is my understanding from the constituents onsite and the limited information provided by the BOP, only auxiliary buildings may be impacted by structural issues, which can be repaired or closed, and programs can be relocated to other facilities at the TCI without adversely impacting the prison's operations or safety of staff and inmates. Furthermore, constituents onsite inform me that inmate housing structures, medical wards, and the cafeteria are not impacted by structural issues.

Accordingly, due to the limited information shared with me and the Taft community, rather than taking what appears to be the drastic step of deactivating the TCI and affecting the nearly 350 corrections staff and almost 2,000 inmates, I request that you: (1) Immediately suspend any actions related to deactivation of the TCI; (2) Provide a thorough briefing on the BOP's decision to deactivate the TCI and the plan to rehabilitate any impacted structures at this prison; and, (3) Work with the current prison operator to determine if there are any structures that pose a direct and imminent threat to corrections staff and inmates.

I look forward to your timely response. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K" and a stylized "M".

KEVIN McCARTHY  
House Republican Leader