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Senate

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

With the state beginning the process of closing Stillwater Prison, we believe now is the right time to seriously consider reopening the Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton, Minnesota, as a permanent part of our correctional system. Located in Senate District 12, the facility has a capacity of 1,600 beds, the same as Stillwater, and could be brought back into use much more efficiently than building a new facility from the ground up. This would also result in significant cost savings for taxpayers, as the facility is already well maintained.

The Appleton prison was previously operated as a private facility that housed Minnesota prisoners, along with inmates from other states. Looking ahead, the state could either contract for the needed prison beds, negotiate a long-term lease, or take direct control of the facility through a purchase. We are not pushing for one option over another at this point but believe any of these approaches would be smart and would benefit both the state and its taxpayers. Reopening Appleton gives the state a practical and timely option for relocating inmates, instead of relying on a slow and uncertain population reduction.

We also encourage you and your commissioners to consider this facility for additional mental health beds, should the state not require the full number of prison beds in the years ahead. With increasing demand for mental health care across Minnesota, it's worth exploring how the facility could serve both purposes. That kind of dual use could help solve two problems at once.

This proposal is about more than logistics. It's about making good policy that promotes public safety, puts existing resources to use, and brings jobs and economic opportunity back to a rural community. For correctional staff who may choose to relocate, Appleton offers great outdoor recreation, a lower cost of living, and much more affordable housing than the Twin Cities. This makes it a strong option for families and workers alike.

We look forward to working with you and Commissioner Snell as the Stillwater closure moves forward. Please feel free to reach out if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

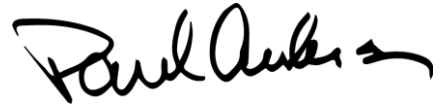
Senator Torrey Westrom

SD 12

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Torrey Westrom". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line crossing over the middle of the name.

Representative Paul Anderson

12A

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping flourish at the end.