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CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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May 21, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Honorable Tae D. Johnson
Acting Director
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Acting Director Johnson,

I write to bring your attention to an ongoing matter of concern in my district regarding the relocation and expansion of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility from South Portland to 40 Manson Libby Road in Scarborough, Maine.

Last year, constituents and local elected officials began to raise concerns about the General Service Administration's (GSA) decision to lease a building in Scarborough, Maine for an ICE office that will be co-located with a Vet Center. I requested that GSA consider delaying ICE's occupancy of the building until the local community and stakeholders could have the opportunity to engage with GSA and ICE regarding the relocation plan.

Of the highest concern was the perceived lack of transparency and stakeholder participation in the relocation process, as most members of the community learned of the relocation through a press report based on an email obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

In response, GSA provided documentation from 2017 showing that the agency had informed the towns of Scarborough and South Portland that DHS was seeking a class A office in their communities. However, because DHS encompasses several agencies, it is likely that the notification was insufficient to reflect the actual agency and scope of the project. Local officials have stated publicly that they were not informed about the ICE project.

I have also heard significant opposition from the veteran community in my district, many of whom are deeply concerned that this facility is to be co-located with a Vet Center. I share their concerns that the presence of the ICE facility could deter non-citizen veterans from seeking

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medical treatment at the Vet Center, and that the presence of detained individuals at or transiting to the ICE facility could be harmful to veterans diagnosed with trauma-induced mental health disorders.

The community opposition to the relocation of this facility remains strong and continues to grow. I have been contacted by town officials, local citizens, veterans, immigration and social justice advocacy groups, and individuals across the State of Maine whose opposition has been driven by ICE's recent policies and priorities under the previous administration. At a recent Scarborough Town Council, state legislators from the community spoke unanimously in opposition and expressed that they were seeking assistance from the federal delegation to stop the proposed plan.

This comes at a time when there has been an unprecedented influx of asylum seekers arriving in southern Maine. Those who are committed to their integration and contributions feel strongly that ICE's reputation is antithetical to their values and goals. Scarborough constituents have stated that they have worked hard for their town to be safe and welcoming, and they feel that the presence of an ICE facility undermines those efforts.

I strongly urge you to review the relocation plan for this facility and engage in an open and transparent dialogue with the local community and elected officials about their concerns.

Additionally, I request a response to the following questions:

- 1) What are the specific parameters that DHS sets for GSA in selecting a location for a new or existing ICE facility?
- 2) Are there additional parameters given when selecting a location for a facility with detention capacity?
- 3) Does DHS consider co-location with other federal agencies when relocating an ICE facility, including any veterans' health care facilities?
- 4) What specific information is DHS required to provide to the town where a new facility is set to be located, or an existing facility relocated, regarding the specific agency and mission of that facility?

Thank you, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress