

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

P.O. Box 942883  
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001



December 9, 2011

The Honorable Kristin Olsen  
State Capitol, Room 2111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Olsen:

I am writing to inform you that on December 5, 2011, I signed a resolution authorizing the conversion of Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW) in Chowchilla into a level II male institution. This conversion is expected to take place in phases, with expected completion of the conversion by July 2013.

The decision to convert VSPW into a male institution was a very difficult decision but necessary because of the implementation of the 2011 Public Safety Realignment. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has been directed by the United States Supreme Court to reduce its statewide inmate population to 137.5 percent design capacity by June 27, 2013. Realignment, a cornerstone of CDCR's plan to meet that requirement, will result in a large reduction in population, specifically with a significant reduction in the female inmate population. It is expected that by June 2013 the female inmate population will drop from 9,404 (September of 2011) to merely 5,767. As a result of this decrease, and the need to continue to reduce overcrowding of the male population, the decision was made to convert a female institution to male.

The decision to convert VSPW into a level II male institution was made after careful consideration and meeting with the community in Chowchilla to fully understand their concerns. The conversion of VSPW will require negligible or no expansion of use beyond that of the existing female prison. It will involve only minor alteration of the existing prison facilities, and will involve little to no expansion of any of the physical characteristics of the prison. It is expected that the male population numbers will be similar to those of the female population at that facility, and that existing staffing levels will remain the same. In addition, because only minor changes are needed for the conversion, CDCR has addressed its environmental review obligations by filing a Class 1 Categorical Exemption.

While I recognize that many individuals have expressed concern with the conversion of VSPW into a male institution, I believe this conversion is necessary given the CDCR's changing population resulting from the 2011 Public Safety Realignment.

If you have any questions, please contact Darby Kernan, Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislation, at (916) 323-6006.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew L. Cate". The signature is written in a cursive style.

MATTHEW L. CATE  
Secretary

cc: Darby Kernan