

July 26, 2021

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Item 20 and Opposition to the Long-Term Use of Camps Joseph Scott and Kenyon Scudder

Dear Chair Solis and Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of the Santa Clarita City Council, I am writing to express our appreciation in continuing the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) item at the July 13, 2021, regular meeting. Furthermore, in regard to the Substitute Motion made by Supervisors Mitchell and Kuehl in Item 20 on the July 27, 2021, regular meeting agenda, we respectfully request that the DJJ plan not be considered for your approval until all reports and assessments, including an environmental review in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is completed and submitted for your review.

As currently proposed, the Substitute Motion directs the Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) subcommittee to submit the DJJ plan for your approval within 75 days. However, a report back related to the proposed renovation plan, CEQA findings or plan for CEQA compliance, and feedback from community stakeholders is not due until 90 days, over two weeks after the DJJ plan is submitted for your approval. As such, the Substitute Motion does not provide the Chief Probation Officer, JJRBG, Youth Justice Transition Advisory Group, and yourselves the ability to incorporate and consider the assessment of renovation needs and environmental review of Camps Joseph Scott (Scott) and Kenyon Scudder (Scudder), prior to approval of the DJJ Plan.

It is critical that factors related to the environmental impacts of designating Camps Scott and Scudder as long-term treatment facilities, in addition to their vulnerabilities to floods and wildfires, are studied and incorporated in the DJJ Plan. At a minimum, a comprehensive assessment regarding the safety and wellbeing of those inside Camps Scott and Scudder, including the facilities locations in high-risk area flood zones, blue line streams, and high-fire hazard severity zones, be incorporated in the County's decision-making process in identifying suitable facilities for the intended DJJ population and County staff.

Furthermore, it is imperative that all existing facilities across the County, are assessed and considered in this process, to ensure that the decisions made on the transition of DJJ youth is in the best interest of the youth treated in the facilities, County staff serving in the facilities, and surrounding communities near the facilities.

Additionally, the Substitute Motion includes a directive that, “any and all alternatives to the DJJ shall be rooted in the vision of the Youth Justice Reimagined.” The Substitute Motion also cites that, “considerations and recommendations echo and are consistent with those articulated in the W. Haywood Burns Institute’s final report issued in December 2020 based on last year’s multi-stakeholder DJJ Transition Team that convened intensely over six months.”

As was cited in our letter to you dated July 9, 2021, the Youth Justice Reimagined Report, issued in December 2020, does not make one mention of Camps Scott and Scudder and, moreover, recommends Campus Kilpatrick and Camp Gonzales to serve as the long-term treatment facilities for the DJJ population. As the Youth Justice Reimagined Report conducted a comprehensive analysis of existing facilities, we encourage you to adopt the recommendations outlined in the report to designate Campus Kilpatrick and Camp Gonzales as the long-term treatment facilities.

Furthermore, in response to capacity concerns at Campus Kilpatrick shared in the Substitute Motion, we request that Fred Miller Camp, located adjacent and connected by a shared fence to Campus Kilpatrick, be considered as an expansion to potentially serve the DJJ population or safely house County staff. Fred Miller Camp is cited in a report developed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) in June 2021, as an expansion option for vocational or housing opportunities to Campus Kilpatrick.

This same LASD report describes Campus Kilpatrick as a, “modern junior college campus, with ample recreational opportunities, including basketball courts and a spacious gym.” Furthermore, the report cites that Campus Kilpatrick, “offers woodshop and nine classrooms, all modern and ADA compliant,” contrary to statements included in the Substitute Motion that Campus Kilpatrick has limited recreational and classroom space. These contradictions further indicate the need for a comprehensive and comparative assessment of all County existing facilities for the transition of the DJJ population.

The Youth Justice Reimagined Report and Substitute Motion indicate that many of the youth within the DJJ population have experienced the greatest level of trauma, abuse, and hardships, which requires a secure facility but with a therapeutic environment to promote a non-institutionalized setting for youth to adequately and efficiently rehabilitate. Campus Kilpatrick is clearly the most comprehensive, modern, and secure

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

July 26, 2021

Page 3

youth facility that already offers the desired “LA Model,” treatment for a population that is in the most need for rehabilitative resources.

Campus Kilpatrick is the top youth facility in the County and arguably in the state, and therefore, it is only prudent that the DJJ youth served within the County’s authority are treated at Campus Kilpatrick.

Thank you for your consideration on this grave matter. We look forward to working with each of you in securing the most adequate resources and facilities for the transition of the DJJ population. Should you or your staff require any additional information regarding this letter, please contact Masis Hagobian, Intergovernmental Relations Analyst, at (661) 286-4057 or mhagobian@santa-clarita.com.

Sincerely,

William A. Miranda
Mayor

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cc: Members of the City Council
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Human Services Agency
Los Angeles County Division of Juvenile Justice Subcommittee
Los Angeles County Youth Justice Work Group
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