

DIVISION OF ADULT INSTITUTIONS

SIERRA CONSERVATION CENTER

5100 O'Byrnes Ferry Road
Jamestown CA 95327



June 28, 2012

Honorable Eric L. DuTemple
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, Tuolumne County
60 North Washington Street
Sonora CA 95370

FILED

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Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

By: *[Signature]* Clerk

Dear Judge DuTemple:

I have reviewed the 2011/2012 Tuolumne County Civil Grand Jury Report as it pertains to Sierra Conservation Center. I want to thank all of the jury members for their time and effort while visiting our facility and Baseline Conservation Camp, CC# 30. I also want to thank them for the positive information concerning our operation documented in the report.

I have reviewed the report findings and recommendations carefully and provide the following response:

- Finding #1: *The initial visit found that the Level III overflow housing unit (gym) held approximately 150 inmates in 2 and 3 tier bunk beds. Upon entering the unit, it immediately seemed crowded and fairly noisy, but well kept. The second visit to the unit found the building empty of all inmates. They had been relocated to other areas or paroled. The beds had been dismantled and removed. A small portion of the unit was now being utilized by Level III medical personnel.*

- Recommendation #1: *The Grand Jury recommends that a statistical analysis of this program become available, the 2012/13 Grand Jury follows up on the positive and negative effects of AB 109.*

I agree with the finding and recommendation. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) are currently implementing a state standardization for all CDCR prisons which will allow for programs to be conducted in the now empty gymnasiums. Sierra Conservation Center is scheduled to have a custody staff member assigned to oversee the second watch recreational programs that will be scheduled in the Level III gymnasium. This staffing is due to come on line as early as July 23, 2012, however due to the on-going negotiations with labor unions this may not be the final date of implementation. At this time the gymnasium is used to conduct the evening programming which includes: Celebrate Recovery, Narcotics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

- Finding #2: *Staff response to the lockdown alarm in the medical facility was immediate. All visible inmates knelt down on the ground and didn't move until told to do so by staff. All inmates were sent to their dorms and locked down until further notice.*

- Recommendation #2: *No recommendation*

I agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary.

- Finding #3: *A copy of a menu was provided to us and the meals met the nutritional guidelines set forth by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).*
- Recommendation #3: *No Recommendation*

I partially agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary. To clarify, the nutritional guidelines followed by the CDCR are set forth by the National Institute of Health.

- Finding #4: *During our tour of BFC, the Fire Crews were battling a major wild fire in Kern County, CA. Temporary inmate housing was established to accommodate fire crews from other counties who were brought in to cover our area.*
- Recommendation #4: *No recommendation.*

I agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary.

- Finding #5: *Upon inspection, the Grand Jury was impressed by the immaculate condition of the BFC and surrounding grounds. The dorms were smaller and better appointed than those at SCC. Strict rules were adhered to, but inmates were on an honor system and were free to move about the facility. They also had access to all exercise equipment as part of their readiness training.*
- Recommendation #5: *No recommendation.*

I agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary.

- Finding #6: *Due to cuts in budgetary spending, the CDCR evaluated and made additional cuts to inmate vocational training. However, all qualified inmates still have access to educational programs.*
- Recommendation #6: *No Recommendation*

I agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary.

- Finding #7: *An inmate generated program called Freedom and Choice was created in 2005 to "Provide an alternative prison environment free of prison politics (gangs) racism and violence." They are governed by their own elected board of officers, and have established their own set of rules. All new members who want to join have to be voted in and sign a contract which agrees to an established set of by-laws. Originally housed in a group of five dormitories, they are now down to one due to decreasing numbers of members being paroled and/or outside peer pressure resulting in lower participation.*

- Recommendation #7: *No Recommendation*

I agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the 2011/2012 Tuolumne County Civil Grand Jury satisfying the requirements of Penal Code 933 and 933.05.

If you have any questions, please contact Correctional Lieutenant L. A. von Savoye, Administrative Assistant, at (209) 984-5291 extension 5499.

Sincerely,



HEIDI M. LACKNER
Warden (A)