

FACILITY PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT
P.O. Box 942883
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

PROPOSED INSTITUTION CLOSURE

CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL CENTER

SUSANVILLE, CALIFORNIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

- PROJECT TITLE:** Proposed Closure of the California Correctional Center (CCC)
- LEAD AGENCY:** California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)
- PROJECT LOCATION:** CCC is located at 711-045 Center Road, Susanville, CA 96127-0790. It encompasses approximately 1,100 acres within the Honey Lake Valley area of northeastern California, roughly 7 miles east of Susanville, in Lassen County (Figure 1).
- PURPOSE OF NOTICE:** This Notice of Preparation (NOP) complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which requires the distribution of an NOP when a lead agency has determined that a proposed project will require preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The objective of the NOP is to solicit comments on the scope of the issues to be addressed in the EIR and to provide an opportunity for early consultation with local, responsible, and trustee agencies and other interested parties.
- COMMENT PERIOD:** The NOP review period begins January 11, 2022 and ends February 14, 2022. Comments may be sent anytime during this NOP review period. Please include the name of a contact person for your agency or organization, if applicable, and the project name in the subject line. All comments should be directed to:
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Facility Planning, Construction and Management Division
- Attention: Peter J. Connelly Jr.
P.O. Box 942833
Sacramento, California 94283-0001
- E-mail: CCCClosure@ascentenvironmental.com

SCOPING MEETING: CDCR will facilitate a virtual scoping meeting to present information on the proposed project and solicit oral comments from agencies and the public on the scope and content of the EIR on **January 27, 2022** at **5:00 p.m.**

Please register in advance for this webinar using the link below:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SUvAzehdQLWegZp1FVJUUnw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT: In compliance with Section 5003.7 of the California Penal Code, CDCR is required to notify the State budget committees of the California State Assembly and California State Senate, as well as the Legislative Analyst's Office, of two specific State-owned and -operated prisons proposed for closure. Accordingly, the CDCR Secretary has identified the Deuel Vocational Institution (closed as of September 30, 2021) and the California Correctional Center (CCC).

CDCR is proposing to close CCC, in part, because of the overall statewide decline since 2010 of more than 52,000 incarcerated persons housed in State correctional facilities. This decline has occurred for various reasons, including recent changes to the California Penal Code, voter initiatives, and federal court orders imposing capacity limitations. Incarcerated population declines have also occurred in response to CDCR administrative actions and measures implemented to mitigate and reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within CDCR facilities. CDCR projects a long-term population decrease; this will allow CDCR to close CCC without compromising the safety and security or the overall welfare of the incarcerated population at the remaining active correctional facilities. The CCC closure also would not affect any ongoing statewide CDCR programs including rehabilitative programs, health care, or other requirements mandated by the federal courts.

Although CDCR plans to cease operations at CCC, a reduced number of personnel would be retained to ensure that the facility is maintained in operating condition, as described below. Operation of neighboring High Desert State Prison (HDSP) would continue, with the responsibility of operating some facilities that HDSP shares with CCC to be transferred to HDSP.

To facilitate facility closure, incarcerated persons would be transferred from CCC to other CDCR institutions that meet the needs of the incarcerated person. Additionally, CDCR and California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS) would work with CCC staff to facilitate staff transfers to other CDCR institutions, including to HDSP as appropriate, to minimize loss of State employment.

After all currently incarcerated individuals are transferred to other institutions, the CCC facility would enter a phase characterized as a "warm shutdown." This transition to a fully closed facility would result in the retention of approximately 10 staff to maintain/minimize deterioration of critical facility infrastructure, such as electrical systems, heating/ventilation equipment, plumbing, building exteriors, and grounds. The perimeter secure fencing would also be maintained; no public access would be allowed on the grounds without advance approval. Security would be maintained 7 days a week.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT: The EIR will describe the potential for the proposed project to result in physical environmental changes to each resource area identified below. Anticipated environmental effects are identified below to provide information for agencies and the public to provide comments on the scope of the issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR. CDCR will consider comments received to determine the scope of the issues to be addressed in the EIR. If significant impacts are identified, the EIR will include mitigation measures to reduce any significant impact to less-than-significant, if feasible.

- **Aesthetics.** There are no scenic vistas or important scenic resources in the project area, and the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character of the project site or introduce a new source of light or glare. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to analyze these issues in the Draft EIR.

However, CDCR will analyze the potential for closure to result in a reduction of economic activities that could cause urban decay, which if it occurred, could entail the substantial physical deterioration of properties and structures in the project region, including within the city of Susanville.

- **Agriculture Resources.** Proposed closure would not result in any change in use or other physical environmental change to agricultural resources in the project area. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to analyze this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Air Quality (including Odors).** Proposed closure of CCC would reduce emissions of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants related to energy use, consumer product use, and reduced vehicle trips for staff or the incarcerated population. Closure would also result in substantially reduced energy usage due to the decreased demand for water heating, space heating, lighting, and appliances, as well as from reduced employee commutes. Under existing conditions, CCC utilizes three sources of energy which includes electricity provided through the grid; radiant heat using glycol, a heat transfer fluid, supplied by the High Sierra Cogeneration Power Plant (HSCPP), and used by the on-site boilers for water and space heating; and natural gas, which is supplied through direct natural gas lines, and used for additional heating (e.g., water, space heating, and cooking). The boilers at CCC are powered by natural gas for water and space heating. HSCPP does not provide electricity to CCC but, instead, delivers the electricity produced directly to the local electricity utility, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (PS). On-site natural gas combustion (e.g., by the boilers, cooktops, clothing dryers) at the CCC results in emissions of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants.

Under closure conditions, the cogeneration facility would continue to provide radiant heat to CCC at the amount currently provided, which comprises a very small amount of CCC's heating needs. With less demand for cooking, water heating, and space heating, natural gas demand would decrease, including from reduced use of the on-site boilers and other appliances. Without the incarcerated population, CCC would also use less electricity. Some energy use would remain to support general maintenance activities, including landscaping and building upkeep, which would continue during the warm shutdown phase. Reduced on-site natural gas usage would result in reduced emissions from natural gas combustion. Proposed closure would also result in a reduction in emissions related to consumer product use and vehicle trips. Closure would result in reduced emissions of reactive organic gases (ROG) which are emitted from cleaning products and other consumer products (e.g., paint, glues) because the facility would require less maintenance without the incarcerated population to serve. Vehicle trips, and related emissions, associated with visitation and transfer of incarcerated persons would cease while trips associated with employee commute would be substantially reduced to reflect only the commutes associated with the staff members who would continue to work on-site to maintain the facility. Given that the proposed closure of CCC would result in a reduction in criteria air pollutants, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of an air quality plan.

In 2015, the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District received multiple odor complaints regarding odors emanating from the wastewater treatment plant ponds. Water is needed to treat and process the wastewater as well as balance odors generated from the biological decomposition of wastewater. Odors that led to the 2015 complaints were caused by a reduction

in the water-to-load ratio associated with the low-flow fixtures that had been recently installed at CCC. In response, CDCR installed aerators and other solutions that abated the offending odors. These existing abatement solutions would continue during closure. Additionally, the reduction in wastewater flows from CCC would not affect the overall water-to-load ratio treated by the WWTP because the WWTP serves both CCC and HDSP and the wastewater flows generated by HDSP would remain unchanged. Because the odor abatement systems and wastewater load ratios would not change under closure and because the total wastewater treated by the WWTP would decrease, odors would likely be reduced under closure conditions. As such, it is anticipated that the project would not result in odors or other emissions adversely affecting a substantial number of people. CDCR will address this issue in the Draft EIR.

- **Biological Resources.** Under the proposed closure, maintenance activities at CCC would continue at a reduced capacity. The physical conditions of the site would not be altered (e.g., no tree removal, structural alteration, or other construction activities) in such a way that could adversely affect biological resources. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to analyze this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Cultural and Historic Resources.** CCC does not meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or for eligibility as a California Historical Landmark. Proposed closure would not require ground-disturbing activities which could impact archaeological and/or historic resources. Therefore, proposed CCC closure would not cause a substantial adverse change in or otherwise adversely affect any archeological or historic resource. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to analyze this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Energy Resources.** Proposed closure of CCC would substantially reduce the demand for energy currently needed to house incarcerated persons and staff to a level required to facilitate the warm shutdown phase. Proposed closure would not result in new or increased energy demand or wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy consumption, or conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to analyze this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Geology, Soils, Mineral Resources, and Paleontological Resources.** None of the proposed closure activities would involve construction of new facilities, ground disturbance, or any other activity that could expose people or structures to unsafe geological conditions, result in erosion, or affect mineral or paleontological resources. Proposed closure would not include the construction and use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Closure of the CCC facility would substantially reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) related to energy use and vehicle trips following the relocation of the incarcerated population. Closure would result in substantially reduced energy usage due to the decreased demand for water heating, space heating, lighting, and appliances. Vehicle trips, and related emissions, associated with visitation and transfer of incarcerated persons would cease while trips associated with employee commute would be substantially reduced to reflect only the commutes associated with the staff members that would continue to work on-site to maintain the facility. The project would reduce GHG emissions overall, and would not generate additional GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment or conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.

- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** General maintenance activities, including the use of hazardous chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides, would continue at CCC at a reduced level; however, all potentially hazardous chemicals would continue to be handled, stored, and used consistent with applicable regulations governing their transportation, storage, and use. None of the activities proposed for CCC closure would require modifications at any known hazardous materials site. All the incarcerated population and most of the staff would be transferred out of CCC, and public access to the site would be limited, allowed only with advance approval by the remaining CCC staff. Therefore, proposed CCC closure would decrease the exposure of people to hazards or hazardous materials compared to existing conditions. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Hydrology/Water Quality.** Under closure conditions, maintenance activities at CCC would continue at a reduced level compared to the current maintenance activities. Proposed closure would not alter local drainage patterns, exacerbate erosion, affect storm water discharges and/or alter the potential for flooding within or adjacent to CCC grounds. CDCR would comply with the regulations of the regional water quality control board and all other applicable State and federal water and wastewater regulations, including the conditions of existing permits applicable to operation of the water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Land Use/Planning.** Proposed closure activities would not result in physical changes to the environment that could physically divide an established community. There would be no change in current land use. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Noise.** Noise associated with proposed closure of the CCC facility would be limited to periodic landscape maintenance activities (e.g., use of mowers). Existing noise-generating activities at the CCC facility would generally decrease during the warm shutdown phase compared to existing conditions. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Population/Housing.** Proposed closure of the CCC facility would result in the transfer of all incarcerated persons and most staff. Approximately 10 staff would remain on-site to implement maintenance activities associated with the warm shutdown phase of the facility; some CCC employees may also be transferred to HDSP. CDCR and CCHCS would work with CCC staff to facilitate staff transfers to minimize staff relocations and displacement of individuals, including possible relocation opportunities to HDSP. Staff also would be invited to competitively apply for vacancies statewide. It is reasonably anticipated that staff who are not transferred to HDSP would disperse throughout the state according to the relocation opportunities available at other CDCR facilities rather than concentrate their relocations in any specific communities. Therefore, proposed CCC closure would not result in unplanned population growth in any area or necessitate the construction of replacement housing for relocated employees. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Public Services.** Closure of CCC involves transferring the entire incarcerated population and most of the on-site staff out of CCC. Approximately 10 staff would remain to implement the warm shutdown activities. The removal of the incarcerated population and significant reduction in on-site staff would substantially reduce demand for public services. It is reasonably anticipated that staff who are not transferred to HDSP would disperse throughout the state according to the relocation opportunities available at other CDCR facilities rather than concentrate their

relocations in any specific communities. Therefore, the provision or construction of new or physically altered governmental facilities to maintain public services would not be required due to decreased demand for services under warm shutdown conditions. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.

- **Recreation.** Proposed closure of CCC would result in the transfer of all incarcerated persons and most staff out of CCC. Closure activities would not increase the demand for recreational facilities in the region or result in a substantial increase in the use of existing public recreational facilities. The proposed project does not involve construction of any new public recreation facilities. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Transportation.** All activities associated with proposed closure of CCC would be confined to the CCC site. None would affect transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. In addition, closure of the facility would result in a long-term substantial decrease in the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources.** CDCR will consult with interested Tribes as required by Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1. The process and results of the consultation, including identification of Tribal Cultural Resources and potential impacts to these resources, will be described in the Draft EIR.
- **Utilities/Service Systems.** Closure of CCC would result in the transfer of all existing incarcerated persons and most of the staff out of CCC. This transfer would substantially reduce the on-site population and resulting demand on existing utilities and service systems. Warm shutdown activities would be limited to those needed to maintain the existing buildings and facilities and would not require the construction of new buildings or result in an increase in population necessitating the need for additional utility infrastructure or the relocation of existing utility infrastructure. Existing water, wastewater, and solid waste services would be sufficient to accommodate reduced demand. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.
- **Wildfire.** The substantial reduction in on-site population and less intensive use at CCC from proposed closure would reduce the existing, albeit low, wildfire risk, including the reduction of potential sources of ignition. Reducing the population would also substantially decrease the number of people exposed to the risk of wildfire compared to existing conditions. Closure activities would not involve construction on or near area roadways, so they would not interfere with the passage of emergency vehicles or vehicles evacuating the area or otherwise impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Currently, qualifying incarcerated persons receive fire suppression training at Sierra Conservation Center and CCC. After completing fire suppression training, the incarcerated person is transferred to a conservation camp from which they are deployed as needed for fire suppression. It is anticipated that SCC has the capacity to accommodate all qualifying incarcerated persons for training after CCC closure. No conservation (fire) camps are proposed for closure as part of the project. For these reasons, there would be no reduction in fire suppression personnel resulting from CCC closure and no exacerbated risk of wildfire. Based on existing information, CDCR does not expect to discuss this issue in the Draft EIR.

Other CEQA issues that will be addressed in the EIR include alternatives, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts.



Figure 1 Project Location