

DEATH PENALTY FOCUS

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State Auditor Finds Proposed Death Row Facility to Cost Millions More Than Originally Projected

San Francisco - Today the California State Auditor revealed that “the cost to construct the CIC (condemned inmate complex) will exceed Corrections' estimate of \$356 million by \$39.3 million and that the cost to activate the new CIC will reach \$7.3 million.”

The auditor went on to reveal, “our consultant estimates that the average new staffing costs to operate the new CIC will average \$58.8 million per year, for a total of approximately \$1.2 billion over the next 20 years.”

The report also mentions that the Auditor's consultants expressed concerns about the plan to doublecell death row prisoners. The Auditor states, “If the plan to double-cell inmates is not a feasible approach, the CIC will reach capacity in 2014, less than three years after it is expected to open.”

Stefanie Faucher, Program Director for the San Francisco based non-profit organization Death Penalty Focus, said, “It is shocking and deplorable to think that the state would consider investing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in the death penalty at a time when it is slashing funds for education, public services and infrastructure. Our limited public safety resources could be better spent on programs that seek to deal with the causes of violent crime and on services for crime victims.”

Judy Kerr, spokesperson for California Crime Victims for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, a group made up of individuals who have lost family members and loved ones to homicide, said, “I'm horrified that the state continues to pour our precious tax-dollars into a broken death penalty system while so many homicides continue to go unsolved. My brother was brutally murdered in 2003, and his killer has yet to be apprehended. Shouldn't we spend our limited resources on getting more killers off the streets instead of putting just a handful of them on death row? Where is the justice in that?”

“It is unthinkable that the state would even consider spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a new death row at a time when a state commission charged with examining the death penalty system is set to release it's findings by the end of the month. When are we going to realize that all this money we are spending to keep a death penalty that is largely symbolic is wasteful and in fact endangers our communities by taking resources away from programs that could actually improve public safety?” asked Lance Lindsey, Executive Director of Death Penalty Focus.

To read the State Auditor's full report, visit: <http://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2007-120.1.pdf>

To learn more about the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice's death penalty report due out by June 30th, visit: <http://www.ccfaj.org/>

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