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United States Senate

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The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

As previously discussed, the State of Illinois and the Bureau of Prisons continue to negotiate over the purchase of the Thomson Correctional Center in Carroll County, Illinois, for a federal maximum security prison. It is my understanding that both sides have made significant progress and that an agreement is imminent.

I write today to ask you to help identify Department of Justice/Bureau of Prisons funding for the acquisition of this facility as soon as possible.

I was pleased at the inclusion of nearly \$67 million for second year activation costs for Thomson and its 1,600 cells in the President's Fiscal Year 2012 budget. This builds upon the President's Fiscal Year 2011 budget request of \$237 million for the acquisition, upgrade and operation of Thomson.

As you know, Congress has not yet completed the current year spending bills and is operating under a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) in order to fund government operations until approximately March 4, 2011. I will continue to work to include funding for the acquisition of Thomson at the next appropriate opportunity. In December, the House passed a CR and the Senate drafted an omnibus Appropriations bill that both included the necessary funding for the federal acquisition of Thomson.

I strongly support this project as do other bipartisan members of the Illinois/Iowa Congressional Delegations. The sale of Thomson enjoys broad-based local and state support and will lead to significant job creation, more than 1,100 jobs, and economic development in the region. The Bureau of Prisons believes that the acquisition of Thomson will help alleviate serious federal prison overcrowding, currently running as high as 50 percent over rated capacity, and help increase the safety of the system's prison guards.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that the federal government has the funds necessary to purchase and activate Thomson Correctional Facility from the State of Illinois as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator