



CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Because life is good.

Commissioner R. Bruce Scott
Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection
300 Fair Oaks Ln.
Frankfort, KY 40601

July 31, 2015

Re: Environmental and Public Health Impacts Associated With the Proposal for a Federal Prison Facility in Letcher County

Dear Commissioner Scott:

We are writing to ask you to oppose the U.S. Bureau of Prison's (BOP) proposal for a new federal prison proposed to be built in Letcher County because this project will cause [significant adverse impacts](#) to the environment and public health.

BOP is currently finalizing its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project and the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been charged with coordinating the state's environmental review process. We urge you to actively oppose this project based on the following concerns:

- 1) Impacts on the surrounding community from the prison's sewage and industrial waste;
- 2) Harms to the scenic forests, farmlands, waterways that make this area great;
- 3) Adverse impacts to over 70 species that are threatened, endangered, or of special concern under Kentucky law, plus federally protected Indiana and grey bats.
- 4) Destruction of over 700 acres of potential wildlife habitat, to be replaced with concrete, roads, walls, and fences;
- 5) Health concerns for prison staff and prisoners who will be reliant on a likely contaminated water source;
- 6) Socioeconomic impacts of this prison both on the prisoners and society at large.

Your understanding and experience protecting Kentucky's environment allows you to offer the Bureau of Prisons a vital and unique perspective on why this project should not proceed.

Our organizations are deeply concerned about the impacts of this project and were joined by nearly two dozen organizations and individuals in submitting [comments](#) outlining why this

project should not go forward. These comments contain additional detail regarding our concerns with the project, including the issues of particular relevance for the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection.

The public comment period on this project was preceded by [several years of controversy](#) surrounding this project in the region. The prison industry and proponents of their projects have repeatedly made unfulfilled promises of economic prosperity to local communities, but have failed to deliver on those promises. Our concerns are for the well-being of the public and the environment, both of which stand to be harmed if this new prison is built.

In accordance with the duties of your office to protect and enhance Kentucky's environment, we urge you to oppose this new federal prison. Please confirm receipt of this letter, and do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to further discuss this matter.

Sincerely,



Panagioti Tsoalkas
Prison Ecology Project Director
Human Rights Defense Center
561-360-2523
ptsolkas@prisonlegalnews.org



Lori Ann Burd
Environmental Health Director
Center for Biological Diversity
971-717-6405
laburd@biologicaldiversity.org