



Washington State Legislature

August 8, 2018

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
Legislative Building, Room 201
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: Concerns regarding the release plan for convicted Level 3 sex offenders in Lakewood

Dear Governor Inslee:

We write to urge you to reconsider the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) plan to release convicted Level 3 sex offenders Robert Aronson, Daniel Holdren, and Gerald Johnson from the Special Commitment Center on McNeil Island to an unsecure location in a residential setting, in our district in the City of Lakewood. In recent days, Lakewood went to court and argued unsuccessfully against the release of these individuals to the community, arguing that DSHS would not adequately protect the community and the public, and that adult family homes are not equipped to handle supervision of Level 3 sex offenders. They should be placed in enhanced service facilities outside of Pierce County. Unless you take immediate action, it appears DSHS intends to move forward with releasing these individuals into the community of Lakewood.

According to information in our possession, all three men have committed violent acts: Robert Aronson is a convicted child rapist who has admitted to numerous instances of sexual assault against children, Daniel Holdren has twice pled guilty to communication with a minor for immoral purposes, and Gerald Johnson pled guilty to murdering an 11-year-old girl and admitted to countless other sexual assaults against children. These offenders should not be released into an unlocked facility in a residential neighborhood. To make matters worse, these offenders are not originally from Pierce County; they are from Spokane, Thurston, and Mason counties respectively.

The proposed release of three convicted sex offenders to Lakewood has quite understandably generated significant distress in the local community. Lakewood-area adult family homes already house at least four other sex offenders, and the practice of disproportionately discharging these Sexually Violent Predators to Pierce County communities is unacceptable, unsupportable, and contrary to the best interest of public safety.

Not only do the proposed releases of Mr. Aronson, Mr. Holdren, and Mr. Johnson raise questions related to community safety and the "dumping" of a disproportionate share of the state's Sexually Violent Predators in Pierce County, the proposed releases also raise the following issues:

- Do their condition(s) render them safe to release to the community in their present state?
- Has the state employed sufficient safeguards, in coordination with law enforcement and local agencies, to provide for ongoing monitoring or health status and compliance with necessary treatment?

- Have all legal procedures been followed to ensure that the proposed release is legally appropriate, situated in the correct legal jurisdiction and placement setting, and subject to appropriate court, law enforcement, and behavioral health provider monitoring and supervision?
- Is a conditional release process to a less restrictive alternative under RCW 71.09.090 sufficient to provide community protection, oversight, and structure?
- Has the state fully reviewed all findings made pursuant to RCW 71.09.092?
- Has the Department complied with its duty to provide notice under RCW 71.09.140?
- Is the Department in compliance with its obligation to develop policies to ensure equitable placement of sexually violent predators among all the counties pursuant to RCW 71.09.265?
- Does the planned discharge of these offenders to Lakewood comport with the policy directive set forth in RCW 71.09.265?

We urge you to do everything you can to find an alternative course of action. If the Department proceeds with the releases of Mr. Aronson, Mr. Holdren, and Mr. Johnson to Lakewood, local representatives and law enforcement expect to be notified well in advance of their intended release date(s). Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Senator Steve O'Ban
28th Legislative District



Representative Dick Muri
28th Legislative District

Cc: Prosecutor Mark Lindquist
Mayor Don Anderson, City of Lakewood
Chief Mike Zaro, Lakewood Police Department
John Caulfield, Lakewood City Manager
Jim Baumgart, Office of the Governor, Senior Policy Advisor
David Westbrook, Office of the Governor, Director of Outreach
Sharon Swanson, DSHS, Legislative Director