



**For Immediate Release**

## **DOC Addresses Population Management**

**October 15, 2019, (Anchorage, AK)** – The Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) soliciting bids to house inmates outside of Alaska. The Department's institutions statewide are currently operating at 97 percent maximum capacity and continue to receive more people every day. With the passage of HB 49, the Department projected an additional 728 inmates this fiscal year. Since July 2019 when the bill was signed into law, DOC has seen its population grow by approximately 250 inmates or five percent.

This decision increases the safety inside our institutions by reducing the immediate burden on our correctional system statewide. "There was a lot of research and thought put into this decision, it was not made lightly," said Commissioner Nancy Dahlstrom. The RFP is set for an initial 3-year contract with the possibility of extension. "Due to our growing population, we will not be closing any facilities or issuing any layoffs. The Department continues to work diligently to fill all current vacancies across the State."

As written in the RFP, DOC is requiring all out of state facilities to provide rehabilitation and evidence-based programming comparable to what is offered in Alaska, as well as maintain our high standard of medical care. "We understand the concerns raised when inmates were outside in past years and have addressed those in this RFP," Commissioner Dahlstrom added. A successful vendor will provide sufficient communication options for inmates to stay in touch with families, ensure Alaskan inmates are housed together and facilitate reentry measures for all offenders. Should a successful bid be awarded, the Department hopes to begin transferring inmates in early 2020.

The alternative option to reopen Palmer Correctional Center was not viable as it would have taken at least 12 months to bring online and required an additional 70 correctional officers be hired. Therefore, the Department is confident this request is the most immediate way to address this imminent population increase within DOC.

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