



REFORMING OUR PRISON SYSTEM TO KEEP WASHINGTONIANS SAFE

For Governor Gregoire, no job is more vital than protecting Washingtonians from crime and criminals, even as the cost of locking up felons continues to rise dramatically while revenue shrinks. To meet that challenge, the Governor believes we must make smarter, more skillful use of the prison facilities we have — and do it without releasing offenders early.

Governor Gregoire has carefully considered recommendations from a study ordered by the 2009 Legislature to reduce the number of beds in the Department of Corrections system by 1,580. The study consultant was directed to consider construction costs, economic impacts on communities and effects on prison staff.



As a result, the Governor proposes to take actions that will save taxpayers \$65 million over the next four years while maintaining public safety. The actions, to be carried out by the Department of Corrections, will:

- » Designate the medium-security McNeil Island Corrections Center facility as a minimum security facility;
- » Close Ahtanum View Corrections Center in Yakima;
- » Close Larch Corrections Center in Yacolt;
- » Close one wing at the old Main Institution at the State Penitentiary in Walla Walla; and
- » Begin construction on new, more-efficient units at the Penitentiary.
- » Close Pine Lodge, a women's facility at Medical Lake. While Pine Lodge was not in the consultant's final report, the facility was listed in the draft report as a potential closure option. The department believes closing Pine Lodge provides taxpayers the greatest savings and will not compromise the ability to maintain the safe management of female offenders.

The majority of offenders affected by this realignment are medium-security offenders who will be relocated to Coyote Ridge Corrections Center in Connell. The minimum-security offenders will be sent to McNeil Island, Coyote Ridge or Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women. The department will begin this process in January 2010, which is slated for completion by November 2010.