

Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland
Security

February 18, 2026

Representative Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gosar:

Thank you for your February 4, 2026 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) about a new U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Arizona.

ICE is reengineering its detention structure and acquisition strategy to meet the growing demand for bedspace and to streamline the detention and removal process.

ICE is committed to safe, secure, and humane environments for all those in its custody, no matter what type of facility in which they are housed. All detention centers are required to abide by ICE national detention standards, relevant regulations, or other requirements. Delivered facilities will be safe, energy-efficient, and compliant with all relevant federal, state, and local laws.

Under the previous administration, millions of illegal aliens were released or escaped into the interior, with Arizona on the frontlines of this crisis. These facilities will enhance ICE's ability to arrest, detain, and remove illegal aliens.

Please see the enclosure for responses to your individual questions. Thank you again for your letter and interest in this matter. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 447-5890.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristi Noem", written over a white background.

Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security

Enclosure

**Department of Homeland Security Response to
U.S. Representative Paul Gosar February 4, 2026 Letter**

- 1. What is the planned capacity of the proposed detention facility in Surprise, and what population (e.g., adult males, families, short-term detainees) is expected to be housed there?**

Response: The proposed site, located in Surprise, Arizona, is under consideration to serve as a 500-1,500-bed processing site. Processing sites serve primarily for intake and transfer of aliens who have been arrested and placed into removal proceedings. Average length of stay will generally be 3-7 days before aliens are transferred to a mega detention center for the remaining duration of their removal proceedings.

ICE anticipates onboarding these facilities as part of our detention reengineering initiative by the end of Fiscal Year 2026; however, this is an active procurement, and no final decisions have been made on this facility.

- 2. What DHS components will operate the facility, and will operations be conducted directly by the federal government or through private contractors?**

Response: ICE issued a solicitation to identify vendors to provide comprehensive detention operations and wraparound services including facility, grounds maintenance, and operations services at all newly acquired facilities. As this is an active procurement, no operator has been identified at this time.

- 3. What consultations, if any, have occurred with the City of Surprise, Maricopa County, local school districts, and public safety agencies prior to site selection?**

Response: ICE and the contractor performing due diligence services did not have direct contact with the city of Surprise or Maricopa County prior to site selection. Site selection was predicated on a “No Detrimental Effect” determination. ICE will continue to engage with state and local stakeholders when appropriate, while ensuring operational security.

As ICE advances through the procurement process and awards contracts for retrofit and design build services, communication with state and local officials will be required. As information is able to be made public, the agency will communicate promptly with federal, state, and local lawmakers.

- 4. What traffic impact analyses have been conducted, and what mitigation measures are planned to address increased vehicular traffic in surrounding neighborhoods?**

Response: ICE strives to maintain a cooperative partnership with local communities. ICE will continue to engage with state and local stakeholders when appropriate, while ensuring operational security. As information is able to be made public, the agency will communicate promptly with federal, state, and local lawmakers.

5. How does DHS plan to ensure adequate access to emergency medical services, fire protection, and law enforcement support without straining existing local resources?

Response: ICE will have a fully staffed medical unit tasked with primary care of aliens in detention. ICE strives to maintain a cooperative partnership with local governments, including local fire departments, law enforcement, and EMS. ICE reimburses local partners for medical care and medical services provided.

6. What security measures will be in place to ensure the safety of nearby residents, schools, and businesses?

Response: This will be a secure facility adhering to ICE National Detention Standards. As with all other ICE detention centers, ICE will maintain a robust security staff for the site to ensure safety of detainees, facility staff, and the local community. Please note that ICE is committed to safe, secure, and humane environments for all those in its custody, as well as ensuring community safety.

7. What infrastructure upgrades (roads, utilities, communications) will be required, and who will bear the associated costs?

Response: ICE does not anticipate requiring infrastructure upgrades to surrounding areas. However, a site and engineering evaluation will be completed for this location. ICE has completed feasibility studies and site fit assessments for this facility, which we will provide to your office.

8. What is the anticipated timeline for site development, operational commencement, and any future expansion?

Response: ICE anticipates onboarding these facilities by the end of Fiscal Year 2026. ICE cannot provide specifics on anticipated dates of completion for the Surprise, AZ facility due to the impacts of the current government shutdown. ICE will continue to engage with state and local stakeholders when appropriate, while ensuring operational security. As information is able to be made public, the agency will communicate promptly with federal, state, and local lawmakers.

9. How does DHS plan to maintain ongoing communication with local officials and residents, and what mechanisms will be in place to address community concerns once the facility is operational?

Response: As ICE advances through the procurement process and awards contracts for retrofit and design build services, communication with state and local officials will be required. We will work with your office to ensure communication is provided to all appropriate local stakeholders.

10. Is the proposed detention facility intended to operate on a temporary or permanent basis? If temporary, what is the expected duration of operations, and what specific benchmarks or conditions will determine closure or decommissioning of the site?

Response: ICE constantly evaluates its detention needs and contract structures based on changes in immigration patterns, the operational needs of the agency, and the availability of resources.

11. What contingency plans does DHS have in place should detention numbers exceed the facility's planned capacity, and would such contingencies involve expansion of this site or the use of additional facilities in or near Surprise?

Response: We do not anticipate exceeding site capacity at the site because it will serve as an intake and transfer facility of aliens in ICE custody. Processing sites serve primarily for intake and transfer for aliens who have been arrested and placed into removal proceedings. Average length of stay will generally be 3-7 days before aliens are transferred to a mega detention center for the remaining duration of their removal proceedings.

12. Will detainees be transported to and from the facility by federal personnel, contractors, or local law enforcement, and what coordination agreements—if any—are being contemplated with local agencies?

Response: Detainees in ICE custody will be transferred by an ICE contractor or ICE deportation officers. All vendors contracted by ICE will provide comprehensive detention operations and wraparound services including facility, grounds maintenance, and operations services. As this is an active procurement, no operator has been identified at this time.

13. What funding sources are being used for the acquisition, conversion, and operation of the facility, and has DHS assessed whether future appropriations shortfalls could shift costs or operational burdens onto state or local governments?

Response: Thanks to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, ICE has funding to expand detention space to keep criminal aliens off American streets before they are removed for good from our communities. These efforts aim to meet the growing demand for bedspace across the United States and streamline the detention and removal process, focusing on facilities built specifically to support ICE's needs.

14. What role, if any, does DHS envision for congressional oversight committees in reviewing compliance, operational standards, and community impact once the facility becomes operational?

Response: ICE supports congressional requests to visit detention facilities and other ICE facilities around the country. Any new detention facilities will be subject to the DHS Secretary's guidance for congressional visits to ICE facilities. These facilities will adhere to all statutory requirements and DHS/ICE policies regarding congressional oversight.

15. Going forward, what formal process does DHS intend to use to communicate regularly with Members of Congress and state and local officials regarding the facility's status, operations, and any material changes to its scope or mission?

Response: ICE will continue to engage with state and local stakeholders when appropriate, while ensuring operational security. As information is able to be made public, the agency will communicate promptly with federal, state, and local lawmakers. ICE will continue to abide by all Congressional notifications procedures regarding federal contracts.