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Cameron F. Zeidler, PsyD
Liberty Healthcare Corporation
2251 San Diego Avenue
Suite B-110
San Diego, CA 92110

Director Stephanie Clendenin
California Department of State Hospitals
1600 9th Street, Rm 151
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dr. Zeidler and Director Clendenin:

As District Attorney of San Diego County, I have an absolute duty to protect the citizens of the County of San Diego. It is my understanding that the Department of State Hospitals and Liberty Healthcare have officially recommended Humboldt County Sexually Violent Predator Joshua Cooley to be placed at a residence in Pauma Valley within the County of San Diego.

The Pauma Valley location is the same exact location that San Diego County Superior Court Judge Howard Shore ruled was not a proper placement for San Diego Sexually Violent Predator Joseph Bocklett following a July 31, 2020 public hearing. The reasons Judge Shore ruled the Pauma Valley location was not an appropriate placement for a Sexually Violent Predator included the following: First, the property's proximity to young children, who according to the community members, "run around like the good old days." Second, it is located approximately two miles from an elementary school. Third, the property is located next door to a nursery frequented by children. Lastly, the residence is .52 miles away from a school bus stop where children wait for the bus. Additionally, the property is shared with another renting resident (from the same landlord) that frequently has young children visit. During the public hearing over 75 callers participated and shared their input. Specifically, several Native American Tribal Chiefs spoke and addressed their concerns. Noting that the Native American people have already suffered enough at the hands of the government, especially the children and to now place a sexually violent predator in their backyard will further cause harm, physical and mental, to the tribes and future generations.

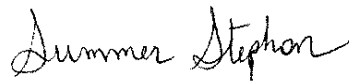
After San Diego County Superior Court Judge Howard Shore ruled that the Pauma Valley property was not an appropriate placement for a Sexually Violent Predator, this location should never have been in consideration as a possible placement for another Sexually Violent Predator, especially one who has no ties nor support systems in San Diego County. Incidentally, Judge Shore cited the prior Sexually Violent Predator's age as a factor in favor of the placement at one point, given that he was in his 70s and not very mobile. However, Mr. Cooley is in his late 30s and has no physical ailments that would make him less agile. Therefore, he is an even greater threat to the public and the community. Additionally, Mr. Cooley's victims were twelve years old (in two separate cases). According to a 2015 unpublished appellate opinion, Mr. Cooley was charged with sexual battery and criminal threats. He also kidnapped and repeatedly raped a 12-year old girl in 2002. He was sentenced to four years, eight months in prison. In 2007, at age 27, he provided alcohol to two 12-year old girls and brought them to his home, where he made out with a 17-year old female. He was then returned to prison on a parole violation. As indicated above, Judge Shore already ruled this placement was not suitable for a Sexually Violent Predator for a myriad of reasons. Ignoring and overlooking Judge Shore's thorough, thoughtful and well-reasoned conclusions and continuing to consider this location for placement of an SVP is reckless and irresponsible.

Department of State Hospitals and Liberty Healthcare may have expended resources and entered into financial agreements with the landlord of the Pauma Valley location. However, once that location was rejected as a suitable placement for a Sexually Violent Predator, it should never have been recommended to place a Humboldt County Sexually Violent Predator. It appears as though recouping the Department's sunk costs is valued more than protecting the public safety of the children and citizens of the County of San Diego. There is no other rational explanation why Liberty Health Care and the Department of State Hospitals would recommend the same location for placement of an SVP after a Superior Court judge had very recently ruled it was not appropriate for placement of an SVP after a very thorough evaluation.

Given all of the public safety concerns raised by placing a Sexually Violent Predator who victimized children at the Pauma Valley residence in the prior case, it is deeply concerning that Liberty Healthcare and the Department of State Hospitals would even consider the Pauma Valley residence as a viable option for Joshua Cooley, who is arguably more dangerous to children, given his criminal history and relative youth. Furthermore, placement of Joshua Cooley so far from his county of domicile is antithetical to his treatment needs and reintegration objectives. His crimes were *not* committed in San Diego County. Mr. Cooley has no known connections to San Diego County. He has no known family members nor a support system in our community. San Diego County played no role in the formation of Mr. Cooley's criminal behavior nor the prosecution and disposition of his case. The burden and responsibility of reintegrating Mr. Cooley into the community should not be placed upon the citizens of San Diego County.

I'm requesting on behalf of San Diego County that you immediately correct this grave error and notify Humboldt County before the October 9, 2020 hearing that you are withdrawing this recommendation. I consider this recommendation in the vein of a direct contempt of a Superior Court Judge's decision made just a few weeks ago. San Diego County has never pushed off our responsibility to place our sexually violent predators as the law requires, and I reject the entire concept that you would consider San Diego County and even more egregious this particular site. The children and citizens of Pauma Valley are no safer from a Humboldt County sexual predator than a San Diego County sexual predator.

Sincerely,



SUMMER STEPHAN
San Diego County District Attorney

cc: Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
Xavier Becerra, Attorney General of California
Jim Desmond, San Diego County District 5 Supervisor
Helen Robbins-Meyer, Chief Administrative Officer for County of San Diego
William Gore, San Diego County Sheriff
Miguel Lopez, San Diego County Sheriff Sergeant-Safe Task Force
Luke Bergmann, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency Director
Bo Mazzetti, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians Chairman
Denise Turner Walsh, Attorney General Tribal Council
John T. Feeney, County of Humboldt Superior Court Judge
Stacey Eads, County of Humboldt Deputy District Attorney