



Internal Memo

Date: October 2, 2025

To: Friends and Family of Incarcerated Persons

From: Paul Schnell, Commissioner

RE: Update on the Phased Closure of MCF-Stillwater

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) is now in Phase 1 of the MCF-Stillwater planned closure. DOC staff and incarcerated individuals have faced significant changes and stress over the last several months. I applaud the resilience, understanding, and strength that so many people have demonstrated throughout this transition. Change is never easy. However, it is noteworthy that this change has ultimately offered the opportunity to expand the therapeutic community designed to treat substance use disorder and to create an incentive structure for the incarcerated population who can now earn placement in an Earned Living Unit by focusing on positive engagement and prosocial behaviors. Yet even with these changes, we recognize the disruption this process has caused and are working to lessen its impact wherever possible.

MCF-Stillwater Population Update:

The MCF-Stillwater incarcerated population will remain at about 550 people for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, a management study that will guide the process of fully closing the facility will begin soon. A decommissioning study will also be underway to determine the long-term plans for the Stillwater site. Full closure must be completed before June 30, 2029.

Legislative Engagement:

On September 25, Commissioner Paul Schnell updated the Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Committee on the phased Stillwater closure. He highlighted efforts to maintain staffing and minimize disruption to the incarcerated population and shared the current status of the Stillwater facility. A recording of the hearing can be found here: senate.mn/media.