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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

We join with local leadership in opposing the Department of Homeland Security's (Department) recent acquisition of a commercial facility in Romulus, Michigan to retrofit into a detention facility for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). On February 16, Romulus Mayor McCraight wrote to you in opposition of the use of this facility for detention and it was also unanimously opposed by the Romulus City Council on February 23. This warehouse facility is not zoned for or developed to house individuals. We are concerned about the safety of detainees and employees, especially at a time when ICE is struggling to provide adequate conditions at its existing facilities. Accordingly, we urge the Department to reverse plans to use this site as a detention facility in Romulus, Michigan and provide a swift response to our questions.

As you have heard from Romulus Mayor McCraight, in the attached letter, no local officials were contacted or notified regarding plans to use this commercially-zoned property for a detention facility.¹ The facility that ICE purchased is located in the city's M-1, Light Industrial District, which is zoned for uses like light manufacturing, small-scale warehousing, and other uses that "generate less truck traffic" than other nearby industrial locations.² A detention facility would unquestionably place increased demands on the city's emergency services, such as ambulance and EMT, in addition to services like sewer, water, and electricity.

¹ Letter from Mayor Robert McCraight, City of Romulus, to Secretary Kristi Noem, Department of Homeland Security and Acting Director Todd Lyons, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Feb. 16, 2026).

² ArcGIS Web AppViewer, Romulus Zoning Viewer (romulus.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4c5e7f692321411fa4970e630b8630a8) (accessed Feb. 18, 2026); City of Romulus, Zoning Ordinance (www.romulusgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/408/Romulus-Zoning-Ordinance-PDF) (Feb. 13, 2023).

In response to questions about this facility, an ICE spokesperson was quoted as saying that new detention “sites will undergo community impact studies and rigorous due diligence process to make sure there is no hardship on local utilities or infrastructure prior to purchase.”³ No local officials were consulted about any such study or due diligence, raising questions about whether the analysis was completed before the purchase of the facility and if it did occur, the accuracy of the work.

The ICE spokesperson further stated, without evidence, that the Romulus facility and construction would create jobs, contribute \$149.9 million to GDP, and bring in more than \$33 million in tax revenue.⁴ That statement did not acknowledge other plans for the facility that also would have brought in jobs and revenue. Prior to the Department’s purchase of the facility, the city’s Department of Building & Safety had issued a renovation permit to accommodate the use of the facility for an automotive manufacturer.⁵ It seems unlikely that a detention facility owned by the federal government would replace the economic benefits of an automotive manufacturer when manufacturing is one of the backbones of Michigan’s economy.

Additionally, while zoned for light industrial use, the facility is surrounded by residential housing.⁶ To operate a detention facility, ICE will require frequent traffic for employees, deliveries of food, clothing, and other consumables, as well as the transport of detainees, all of which could significantly impact the ability of local residents to traverse their streets. In addition to being a hardship on local infrastructure, this is not consistent with the zoning requirement to “generate less truck traffic” outlined in Romulus’s Zoning Ordinance.⁷

Given these serious concerns, we request the following information, not later than March 11, 2026. Please provide:

1. All details regarding what was included in ICE’s purchase of a facility in Romulus and the intended use for the facility, including:
 - a. ICE’s intended use for the facility, including capacity, staffing levels, and the expected length of stay for detainees;
 - b. Any plans for renovation of the facility from a warehouse to a detention center;
 - c. The intended opening date of the facility as a detention center;

³ Metro Detroit lawmakers concerned over planned ICE detention center in Romulus, Fox 2 Detroit (Feb. 16, 2026) (www.fox2detroit.com/news/metro-detroit-lawmakers-concerned-over-planned-ice-detention-center-romulus).

⁴ *Id.*

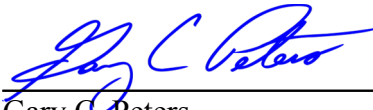
⁵ Letter from Mayor Robert McCraight, City of Romulus, to Secretary Kristi Noem, Department of Homeland Security and Acting Director Todd Lyons, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Feb. 16, 2026).

⁶ ArcGIS Web AppViewer, Romulus Zoning Viewer (romulus.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4c5e7f692321411fa4970e630b8630a8) (accessed Feb. 18, 2026).

⁷ City of Romulus, Zoning Ordinance (www.romulusgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/408/Romulus-Zoning-Ordinance-PDF) (Feb. 13, 2023).

- d. DHS/ICE's justification for the location of this facility, including any plans to use this facility as part of ICE's removal and/or transfer flight operations.
 - e. Any assessments or reviews conducted by the department pursuant to the *National Environmental Policy Act*.
2. The "community impact study" referred to in the statement provided by ICE to local media, including:
 - a. Details about the "rigorous due diligence process" undertaken by ICE prior to purchase, and the basis for the determination that there is "no hardship on local utilities or local infrastructure"
 - b. Any economic impact study conducted, including the full economic analysis that led the Department to claim that the facility would bring in 1,458 jobs, contribute \$149.9 million to GDP, and contribute \$33 million in tax revenue.⁸
3. Information regarding any engagements with local stakeholders prior to purchase of the facility and any plans to engage with appropriate stakeholders moving forward.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters

United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs



Elissa Slotkin

United States Senator

⁸ Metro Detroit lawmakers concerned over planned ICE detention center in Romulus, Fox 2 Detroit (Feb. 16, 2026) (www.fox2detroit.com/news/metro-detroit-lawmakers-concerned-over-planned-ice-detention-center-romulus).

Attachment

City of Romulus

Robert A. McCraight
Mayor

ADMINISTRATIVE and LEGISLATIVE OFFICES
11111 Wayne Road • Romulus, Michigan 48174-1485
www.romulusgov.com

ELLEN L. CRAIG-BRAGG
Clerk

STACY A. PAIGE
Treasurer

February 16, 2026

Hon. Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20528
DHS.IGA@hq.dhs.gov

Todd Lyons
Acting Director ICE
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20536
Detroit.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov

RE: Potential ICE Detention Center in Romulus, MI

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

As Mayor for the City of Romulus, Michigan, I have recently become aware that Romulus has been selected as a potential site (7525 Cogswell Road) for a new ICE Detention Center. The City, including its Department of Building & Safety, Police Department and/or Fire Department, have not been formally contacted or notified regarding this matter. In accordance with 40 USCA §§ 901 - 903, it is my understanding that the federal government is required to provide notice of the intended acquisition and the proposed use of such property. The law provides as follows:

40 U.S.C.A. § 901. Purpose and policy

The purpose of this chapter is to promote harmonious intergovernmental relations and encourage sound planning, zoning, and land use practices by prescribing uniform policies and procedures for the Administrator of General Services to acquire, use, and dispose of land in urban areas. **To the greatest extent practicable, urban land transactions entered into for the General Services Administration and other federal agencies shall be consistent with zoning and land use practices and with the planning and development objectives of local governments and planning agencies.**

CELESTE ROSCOE
Councilwoman

TINA M. TALLEY
Mayor Pro Tem

DAVID S. JONES
Councilman

KATHY ABDO
Councilwoman

WILLIAM WADSWORTH
Councilman

JAMES BULLOCK
Councilman

MARK WILHIDE
Councilman

City of Romulus

40 U.S.C.A. § 903. Acquisition and use

(a) **Notice to local government.**--To the extent practicable, before making a commitment to acquire real property situated in an urban area, the Administrator of General Services shall give notice of the intended acquisition and the proposed use of the property to the unit of general local government exercising zoning and land use jurisdiction. If the Administrator determines that providing advance notice would adversely impact the acquisition, the Administrator shall give notice of the acquisition and the proposed use of the property immediately after the property is acquired.

(b) **Objections to acquisition or change of use.**--In the acquisition or change of use of real property situated in an urban area as a site for public building, if the unit of general local government exercising zoning and land use jurisdiction objects on grounds that the proposed acquisition or change of use conflicts with zoning regulations or planning objectives, the Administrator shall, to the extent the Administrator determines is practicable, consider all the objections and comply with the zoning regulations and planning objectives.

The *Zoning Ordinance of the City of Romulus* prohibits a building or property from being used or occupied without a valid Certificate of Occupancy. The Zoning Ordinance specifically provides as follows:

Sec. 21.06 – Certificates of Occupancy

It shall be unlawful to use or occupy or permit the use or occupancy of any building or premises, or both, or part thereof hereafter created, erected, extended, converted, re-occupied, moved, or wholly or partly altered or enlarged in its use or structure until the Building and Safety Director has issued and attested with his signature, a Certificate of Occupancy to the applicant for the building permit in effect stating that the provisions of this Ordinance have been complied with. Failure to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy shall be a violation of this Ordinance punishable under the penalties of this Ordinance.

7525 Cogswell is located in the City's designated M-1, Light Industrial District. Pursuant to the Romulus Zoning Ordinance, properties located within this zoning district are intended for "light industries" such as:

- Light manufacturing, assembly or processing of previously refined materials; small-scale warehousing, distribution and trucking operations; and other industrial uses that *have no adverse impact upon neighboring districts*;
- Certain commercial uses that provide support services to persons working within or visiting the district; and,
- Uses that "have less impact on surrounding uses and generate less truck traffic" than other industrial type districts.

See, Section 8.01(b)

The location is surrounded by parcels zoned *R-1A – Single Family Residential*. The City of Romulus objects and is strongly opposed to the placement of an ICE Detention Center within the City limits, and in particular objects

City of Romulus

to the location (7525 Cogswell Road) as being wholly inappropriate with the existing zoning and goals of the area.

The City of Romulus is a diverse and close-knit community that holds traditional family values. It is not a “big” community population-wise as Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) takes up a large part of its geographical area. Although its resources are limited, they are specifically and carefully allocated for the benefit of its residents that not only have the burden, but also the honor, of being a major gateway to the Detroit-Metropolitan area and the State of Michigan.

As a gateway to Michigan, the “population” of Romulus doubles everyday (from 25,000 to 50,000) due to the influx of airport employees and visitors. The City’s public safety personnel are already stretched thin *due to this addition of 30 million annual visitors* beyond what is reasonably required to protect the residents of the community since the City is forced to address issues surrounding the Airport and the associated hotel district (the largest hotel district in Wayne County). The location of an ICE Detention Center would create an undue burden on the City of Romulus, its resources, businesses and residents.

The concerns of the City include, but are not limited to, the following:

The Location

- It is not in compliance with the City’s zoning ordinance
- Inappropriate proximity to residential areas and schools
 - The site is within ¼ mile of residential properties
 - The site is 1.5 miles from two schools
- Lack of adequate road access
- Lack of compliance with building, fire, maintenance and other applicable codes and regulations. The structure at issue is highly deficient in satisfying the requirements of the State of Michigan Building Code for safely housing detainees. Fire suppression alone is highly deficient and would render human occupancy of this nature both dangerous as well as direct violation of the International Fire Code.

Public Safety Resources (Police & Fire)

- Such resources will be heavily and negatively impacted by the daily presence of an ICE Detention Center and will compromise the safety of the City’s residents, businesses and visitors to the community.

Infrastructure Requirements

- It will cause a disruption and interfere with the daily lives of residents, visitors and business operations in the City and will heavily tax the infrastructure demands of the City.

City of Romulus

Another aspect of this matter that is particularly disturbing is the fact that the City's Building Department had recently issued a permit to renovate the office space at this location. The contractor was looking to make extensive renovations to accommodate the business needs of a large automobile manufacturer. This now appears to be a significant loss in job creation, business opportunity, and tax base for the City and the region.

For all of these reasons, the City of Romulus objects to the existence of an ICE Detention Center and respectfully requests that an ICE Detention Center not be located in the City.

Any issues, comments or concerns regarding this letter should be directed to my office

Sincerely,



Robert A. McCraight
Mayor, City of Romulus

cc Distribution list via email and US Mail

Charles Wall, US Deputy Director ICE

Thomas Homan, US Executive Director, Border Czar

US Senator Gary Peters

US Senator Elissa Slotkin

US Representative Shir Thanedar

US Representative Rashida Tlaib

US Representative Debbie Dingell

State of Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer

State Senator Darrin Camilleri

State Senator Winnie Brinks

State Representative Dylan Wegela

State Representative Jim DeSana

State Representative Reggie Miller

State Representative Ranjeev Puri

State Senator Sarah Anthony

Wayne County Executive, Warren Evans

Romulus City Clerk, Ellen Craig Bragg

Romulus City Treasurer, Stacy Paige

Romulus City Council

Romulus City Attorney, David F. Greco