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County Executive



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ESSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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January 4, 2013

Dear NJ Advocates for Immigrant Detainees:

The County of Essex is in receipt of your request to end the current contract for Detainee Telephone Services at the Essex County Correctional Facility, and has reviewed the background information, impact analysis, and conclusions contained therein.

The contract in question, State Contract # T-1934, Inmate/Resident/Detainee Telephone Control Service had an original contract term of 4/05/05 through 4/05/10. It was subsequently amended six times to extend the term through 3/03/13. The County of Essex originally opted into the contract on July 1, 2010 and due to the continuation of said contract has not had the need to explore another option.

While we recognize the comparisons made in the Background portion of your memorandum comparing our rates to those in New York City and Rhode Island, as well as the conclusions made regarding commissions collected; it is important to note that Essex County offers rates among the lowest in the State of New Jersey in relation to other Counties and is comparable in its rate of commissions collected.

The County, looking to balance the care of its detainees and inmates housed in its facility with its responsibility of good governance to its non-incarcerated or detained constituency, feels the current contract, despite assertions to the contrary, is reasonable. Further we do not believe we coerce anyone to subsidize the cost of detention or incarceration as is stated. All detainees and inmates, as well as those outside the facility, are made aware of all costs associated with services provided at the facility and have free choice whether to avail themselves of these services.

As such, The County of Essex does not see an immediate need for discontinuing this contract. When such time comes that the current option is no longer available to us, we will, as always, vigorously investigate other options.

Thank you for sharing your opinions on this subject and for your passionate support of detainee rights. We remain open to your thoughts and concerns and welcome a continued dialogue.

Respectfully,

Alfaro Ortiz
Director