



State of Wisconsin

October 12, 2006

Mayor Thomas M. Taylor
City of Franklin
9929 W. Loomis Rd.
Franklin, WI 53132

Dear Mayor Taylor:

This letter is in response to your recent petition for declaratory ruling and hearing. Our agencies have reviewed and carefully considered the requests contained in the petition. You raise important issues of public safety for all Wisconsin communities, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you on them.

Governor Doyle's Administration is committed to providing local law enforcement and local communities with information about sexual offenders, including those committed under chapter 980, to the full extent of the law. The State has made great strides in monitoring and regulating sex offenders and enhancing public access to information about sex offenders. These accomplishments include:

- At Governor Doyle's direction, the Department of Corrections (DOC) made residential address information for all registered sex offenders available to the public on the sex offender registry website, effective December 1, 2005. The Governor has also directed DOC to make several additional enhancements to the sex offender registry website, including adding information on dangerous sex offenders who committed their offenses as juveniles, providing an option of email notifications to flag changes in registry information for a particular offender or community, and including mapping features to help citizens locate offenders living in a particular neighborhood

Governor Doyle directed DOC and the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) to place the State's most dangerous sex offenders on GPS monitoring. Currently, about 40 such offenders, including all individuals on supervised release under chapter 980, are on active GPS monitoring. Governor Doyle also signed legislation this year that will greatly expand GPS monitoring of child sex offenders when the law goes into effect on July 1, 2007.

- Governor Doyle has convened a statewide "SAFE Task Force" comprised of state, local, and federal law enforcement officials with the goal of improving Wisconsin's sex offender registry

and tracking down offenders who fail to comply with registry requirements. The Task Force coordinates statewide efforts in investigating, locating, apprehending, and prosecuting sex offenders who try to become anonymous from Wisconsin law enforcement agencies and citizens. Over 1000 noncompliant sex offenders, including over 600 who committed crimes against children, have been tracked down by SAFE teams.

- The Governor's SAFE Task Force launched "Wisconsin's Most Wanted," a list of 38 of the most dangerous and elusive sex offenders in the State, last May. Twenty-six of the "most wanted" offenders have been located to date. The Governor recently directed the Task Force to add another 21 offenders to the Most Wanted list.

As this record illustrates, Governor Doyle has made the monitoring and community awareness of sex offenders a priority. Our agencies are committed to working with you and other local communities to further our efforts to ensure that persons on supervised release under chapter 980, and other sex offenders, are held accountable, closely monitored, and are not permitted to create new victims in our communities. In fact, in August, representatives from our Departments met with a Franklin citizen's group, Citizens for a Safe Wisconsin, to discuss a variety of issues relating to our efforts to strictly supervise sex offenders and expand public access to information about sex offenders in Wisconsin communities.

Much of your petition focuses on a DHFS-approved chaperone of Billy Lee Morford, who invited him to make recurring visits to a Franklin residence. This issue has been resolved. The Secretary of the Department of Health and Family Services terminated the visits. Please be assured that we are committed to exercising our full legal authority to provide local law enforcement with information about individuals committed under chapter 980, as well as other sex offenders, and to seek expansion of that authority legislatively if necessary. We have directed our staffs to interpret the applicable laws on community notification as broadly as possible.

Your petition raises concerns about the scope and clarity of the rules, policies, and procedures for the supervision of individuals who are on supervised release under chapter 980. DHFS is in the process of developing a specialized policy and procedure manual for the supervision of individuals on supervised release under chapter 980 that will replace the DOC supervision manual that is currently in use. This manual will be implemented in the field by the end of 2006. Additionally, we would welcome the opportunity for representatives of our Departments to meet with city officials and members of the community to review our current and proposed policies and procedures regarding individuals under chapter 980 supervision. Such a dialogue would give us insight into your community's concerns and perspectives about chapter 980 supervision, and may provide your community with a better understanding of the supervision of these individuals.

You also relate concerns about the adequacy of the Wilenet system as a means of providing notification to local law enforcement officials on the status of registered sex offenders. Although we believe Wilenet has been an effective and efficient tool for providing sex offender notifications to law enforcement, we are open to constructive suggestions for improving the system. As noted above, we are proceeding with enhancements of the Sex Offender Registry website to allow email alerts

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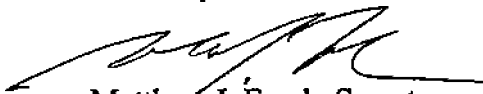
regarding changes in Registry information for a particular offender or within a particular community. This tool will be available to law enforcement, in addition to any citizen who wishes to use this feature. However, if you are interested in further discussions of Wilenet, we believe that these issues can be most effectively addressed in a meeting between DOC staff and law enforcement officials from the City of Franklin.

Your petition also asks DHFS to make a declaration on its authority to inform local law enforcement or other local officials about the identity and addresses of chaperones of persons under a chapter 980 supervised release. Your petition also suggests a more general question about the scope of DHFS's authority to inform local law enforcement officials of recurring visits by an individual on supervised release under chapter 980 to locations that are not a place of residence, employment, or education. As you may know, DHFS's authority to release information on individuals committed under chapter 980 derives from a complex interaction of several different state statutes.

We are open to discussing these issues and believe they may be resolved without the need for a formal hearing. We invite you to contact us if you are interested in pursuing a discussion of the authority to provide local law enforcement with information on the whereabouts and supervision of individuals committed under chapter 980.

Thank you for communicating your concerns to us. We believe the meetings we propose between our agencies and local officials and community members will advance public safety and enhance community confidence in the monitoring of sex offenders. We welcome the opportunity for continued dialogue between our agencies and your community on these important issues of public safety. Please be in touch if you are interested in pursuing any of the opportunities for discussion that we suggest in this letter.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Frank, Secretary
Department of Corrections



Helene Nelson, Secretary
Department of Health and Family Services

cc: Jesse A. Wesolowski, City Attorney for the City of Franklin ✓
Joseph M. Wirth, Special Counsel for the City of Franklin