

Council 28

Washington Federation of State Employees

WFSE/AFSCME AFL-CIO

STATE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

AFSCME

We Make Washington Happen

TO: The Honorable Christine Gregoire

Governor, State of Washington

We realize you are faced with a challenge! Nobody expected or were prepared for the economy to hit rock bottom like it did, but it has, and now as the woman our union supported to lead us in good times and in bad, we look to you to take a stand, and be the compassionate governor we elected to do the RIGHT thing for all the people who live in Eastern Washington!! Eastern Washington has always been the first to lose during the hard times! We lose our fundings, we lose our jobs, and our special people lose their homes...case in point..Interlake School...what happened to the people who lived and thrived there? Yes some of them made it, Lakeland Village is a perfect example for that point...but we also know, many of them lost their lives within the year after they left. This is not fair!

We do not have the big industries such as Microsoft, Boeing, the shipping yards and docks, the fishing, the professional football and baseball teams, ect, to absorb the loss of jobs over here. We do not have the construction that happens daily on the west side of the state. What we have here are proud, hard working, loyal citizens who want to be remembered by our governor, and representatives who are all over there in Olympia. You asked the question..."What will happen to Medical Lake, Washington should Lakeland Village close?" Well the answer is quite clear. The town will die! But, the impact is far more than just Medical Lake! Lakeland Village employees live not only in Medical Lake, but also the towns of Reardon, Davenport, Nine Mile Falls, TumTum, Cheney, Spokane, Spokane Valley, Sprague, Fish Lake, Newport, and beyond. The Counties that will be affected are not only Spokane County, but Lincoln County, Stevens County, and Pend'Oreille County. The loss of revenue is far reaching throughout all of Eastern Washington! Personal loans will go into default, foreclosures on homes will become the norm rather than the exception. People will be unable to buy groceries, school districts will suffer, stores will suffer, small business owners will lose out on

customers able to use their services. We will depend on welfare and unemployment benefits. The taxes we pay for gas, property, and clothing will suffer. Car sales will all but die, home furnishings, and new furniture will not be bought. Lakeland Village is one of the larger employers in all of Eastern Washington, and if you, your legislatures, our representatives, and the democrats want our continued support and vote, then you truly have to do the right thing and keep this facility open, alive and well! This is your opportunity to go down as a great and honorable governor, not one who folded under the pressure of the few mighty ones who live in Western Washington, and support our vulnerable citizens who depend on us to keep their lives safe and secure in the home they love! They and We are your people too! The cost to keep this land safe if you choose to close will cost the taxpayers far too much! How much does it cost the state to keep the land Interlake School is on safe?

Besides being the moral and ethical duty of Washington State to care for its most vulnerable citizens, the most important reason to keep the Medical Lake facility open is fiscal responsibility. While it may seem on the surface that closing the facility will save money, all it does is spread and exacerbate the problems. The clients will disperse into the community where they will immediately begin to overwhelm local law enforcement and medical facilities. Most will still require state housing, but this will now usually be prison. The cost of incarcerating these people is exponentially higher than their current care because of the drain on police resources, the cost of prosecution, and the costs of medication and special care in a facility not equipped to handle their needs. Added to the cost is the harm the clients could do to themselves and the community before they are incarcerated.

There are many things to consider, but closing Lakeland Village is not the option! Cut the pay for the university football coaches...they do not have to be the highest paid state employees!

Name: Laurie Lindholm

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