



COMMITTEE TO END THE MARION LOCKDOWN

March 20, 1990

Mr. J. Michael Quinlan, Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Director Quinlan:

On behalf of the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, I would like to thank you for your letter to us dated February 14, 1990.

We are very pleased that you have decided to change the source of water for USP Marion from Crab Orchard Lake to a series of wells. However, we continue to remain very concerned about the situation and are especially disappointed that you could only promise that the project will be completed "within the next 18 months." As you know, we, and many other people do not share your optimistic estimate of the safety of Crab Orchard Lake water. We feel that each day that the prisoners at Marion drink and shower in the water is another day of needless threats to their health.

With this in mind we spoke with a couple of engineers and both felt that a project such as the one that is being planned at Marion should only take a month or two. Could you please tell us why your estimate is 18 months. Furthermore, if your estimate remains at 18 months, then it seems only prudent to us that some other suitable, temporary water supply be used until the wells are complete. For example, perhaps you could provide bottled water.

We do not know who sent you our petition about the water at Marion, but we are in the process of gathering several thousand signatures of people who endorse the message of this petition. We hope you understand the urgency that is felt in this matter by the prisoners at Marion, by members of the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, and many people in the general public.

We eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

Steven Whitman
Steven Whitman

COMMITTEE TO END THE MARION LOCKDOWN
343 S. DEARBORN, ROOM 1607, CHICAGO, IL 60604 (312) 663-5046



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Office of the Director

Washington, DC 20534

February 14, 1990

Committee to End the Marion Lockdown
343 South Dearborn, Suite 1607
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is in response to your petition concerning the quality of water being supplied to the United States Penitentiary, Marion, Illinois.

The penitentiary does receive its domestic water supply from the Crab Orchard Water district. The water supplied to the institution is continually tested for contaminants. The institution contracts for monthly testing by a laboratory approved by the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). The State EPA Office also performs periodic testing of the Crab Orchard Lake. The Crab Orchard Water district also performs scheduled testing of this water supply. The Public Health Service has reviewed the fresh water and environmental conditions at the Marion facility.

A Health Services review of inmate ailments treated at the institution does not substantiate your concerns that inmates are experiencing adverse health effects related to the drinking water.

Although the drinking water meets all standards and is safe to drink, the water supplied by Crab Orchard Lake is often discolored and has a peculiar taste. In an effort to improve the water supply to the institution the Bureau of Prisons is presently selecting an engineering firm to drill a series of wells at the Marion facility which will provide a new domestic water source for the prison. This project is scheduled for completion within the next 18 months. This water supply will also be continually monitored and tested for purity and compliance with state and Federal standards.

Sincerely,

A. J. Ingram
for

J. Michael Quinlan
Director