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**STATE UNVEILS PLANS FOR NEW MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PRISON TO ADDRESS OVERCROWDING**
Request for Proposals on 4,000-Bed Facility to Be Opened This Spring

HARRISBURG – Department of General Services Secretary James P. Creedon announced today that the commonwealth will soon begin the process of replacing the State Correctional Institution at Graterford in Montgomery County with a new facility.

Department of Corrections Secretary Jeffrey A. Beard, Ph.D., said that the project is part of the state's efforts to address prison overcrowding. Once completed, the new facility will house up to 4,000 inmates.

“We’re building this facility to manage a growing number of inmates, but we’re doing so while keeping an eye on costs,” said Creedon. “We’re approaching this project in a cost-effective manner that will secure the greatest value for the state’s taxpayers, while ensuring the completed facilities are efficient and yield long-term savings to the state.”

“Pennsylvania’s existing correctional institutions are bursting at the seams,” said Beard. “The new beds this facility offers are necessary as the population of our prison system has grown by 21 percent over the past six years from 37,995 in 2001 to more than 49,300 today. Looking down the road, we expect an average growth rate of 4 percent each year through 2012.”

The new Graterford facility will include 4,000 beds and will house medium- and maximum-security inmates.

The existing prison, which was built in 1929, will be mothballed because of the high costs and operational challenges it presents. The facility is difficult to manage, is very staff intensive, and would require more than \$60 million in capital to maintain operations during the next decade.

The new Graterford facility is expected to operate using the existing complement of approximately 1,200 individuals and will pay for itself in 20 years with the operational savings.

The Graterford project is part of a broader state construction initiative that will add nearly 9,000 beds to the state's prison system. Other projects include new prisons in Centre and Fayette counties, as well as four additional housing units in Crawford, Forest, Indiana and Northumberland counties.

The state plans to issue design-build requests for proposals, or RFPs, starting as early as this spring for some of the facilities to generate responses from well-qualified contractors. The design-build concept will enable construction to begin as soon as possible this year by requiring the successful contractors to design the structures as they are being built.

The design-build RFP on the new SCI Graterford prison will be released in late spring with construction planned to start in the fall. The facility will be built on existing state land, with completion expected within three years.

The new prisons will be certified according to energy-saving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) ratings.

The General Assembly authorized construction funds for the seven projects—expected to equal \$862 million—through the state's capital budget.

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