

June 13, 2022

Sheriff Jesse Thomas
Rice County

Re: Response to Rice County Reclassification Extension Request

Sheriff Thomas:

I am responding on behalf of Commissioner Schnell. Thank you for your letter highlighting the strides that Rice County has made to push forward with construction of a new facility. I am hopeful that the new facility will better provide for the safety and well-being of the individuals housed in your jail and address those longstanding concerns regarding lack of adequate programming, and recreation space. I also appreciate you pointing out some of the changes you have made with respect to removing cellular devices other distractions from the secure perimeter. As you obviously recognize, every minute counts and a distracted well-being check could have disastrous consequences.

I spoke with Inspector Pfeifer, and she has assured me that you have met all of the conditions stipulated in Assistant Commissioner Schmit's December 2020 letter extending the reclassification of your facility. I also spoke with Inspector Chris Thoma, who has assured me that you are moving ahead with the construction phase without undue delay.

In light of your efforts, I will grant extension of the reclassification date to July 1, 2023. Inspector Pfeifer and Inspector Thoma will keep me apprised of your compliance with Chapter 2911 and your progress with construction. In fulfillment of our regulatory responsibility, please understand that the reclassification extension may be rescinded should Rice County Jail be found in violation of the Chapter 2911 Rules during upcoming inspections or reviews, or if adequate progress is not made in construction of the new facility.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Inspector Jennifer Pfeifer at jennifer.pfeifer@state.mn.us or 952-484-4342, or Assistant Director Lisa Becking at lisa.cain.becking@state.mn.us or 507-382-9797

Thank You,



Austin Neese
Director, Accountability and Enforcement
Department of Corrections

cc: Rice County Jail file