

CDCR resuming limited intake from county jails; no immediate impact expected in Del Norte

August 26, 2020



A decision by California's state prison agency to resume intake from county jails is not expected to have an immediate impact on the population of Pelican Bay State Prison — or the Del Norte County Jail.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and its related health care services agency announced this week they are working to resume limited adult prison intake operations from county jails, but with precautions.

Since March, the CDCR said, the majority of individuals sentenced to state prison have been retained in county jails pending transfer to state prison. A limited reopening occurred in May but was halted. Around Aug. 9 the closure to intake was continued with no specific ending noted.

"CDCR recognizes the burden placed upon counties housing individuals in local facilities after sentencing, and the burden placed on those individuals and their loved ones in these times of great uncertainty," the

department said in a statement, noting that the department has implemented a reimbursement process to mitigate the fiscal impact associated with delayed transfers.

Among the 95 inmates at the Del Norte County Jail Wednesday, Aug. 26, are some who have been convicted and sentenced to state prison but have had to be retained at the jail due to CDCR's intake closure.

The CDCR said it has worked closely with the California State Sheriffs' Association and public health experts to develop a plan to resume intake in a controlled, limited manner beginning this week. Intake will be prioritized for those counties identified as having the greatest need to create space in their facilities.

Intake will begin with testing, symptom screening, and transfer of 50 individuals from San Joaquin County and 50 from Kings County. Intake will only be accepted at North Kern State Prison and Wasco State Prison Reception Centers. According to the statement, CDCR will continuously evaluate this process and will increase, decrease, or suspend intake in accordance with health care and public health guidance.

The eventual transfer of inmates from the reception centers to Pelican Bay would depend upon individual case factors. Most of the prison is designated for housing inmates requiring high security.

The medical clearance process prior to transfer from county jails is to include COVID-19 testing and symptom screening prior to transfer, use of personal protective equipment during transfer and a quarantine period upon arrival, the CDCR statement noted.

As intake resumes, priority will be given to counties currently conducting COVID-19 testing who agree to test and transfer individuals within seven days of administering the test and who complete a symptom screening with 24 hours of transfer. Priority will also be given to counties extremely limited on jail space.

Until late July, the state was not publishing data related to COVID-19 in county jails, although a few individual counties did provide the information. But since then the Board of State and Community Corrections has established a public dashboard with information from county jails.

A review of data available since July 19 indicates there has been no COVID-19 testing in the Del Norte County Jail reported to the state board. During the period from July 19 to the most recent reporting period ending Aug. 15, the inmate population in the jail has been as high as 93. As of Aug. 26, the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office showed the jail population at 95. The jail's estimated rated capacity, according to the state board, is 146.

Pelican Bay's population, like that of the prison system statewide, has been reduced since March. As of data reported on Wednesday, Aug. 19, the prison was barely over its design capacity with 2,392 inmates reported and a design capacity of 2,380 (100.50% of capacity).

As of March 18, shortly after a national emergency was declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pelican Bay inmate population was 2,653 (111.47% of design capacity).

Statewide, as of Aug. 25, there are 95,712 incarcerated persons in California's prisons – a reduction of 19,606 since March 12.

More information about CDCR's jail intake plan is available [HERE](#).