



March 24, 2026

**VIA EMAIL & CERTIFIED MAIL NO.: 7015 3430 0000 6738 3176**

James K. Ingalsbe  
Assistant Director  
Office of Asset and Facilities Management  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
500 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20536

RE: 51 Rausch Creek Road, Tremont Township, Schuylkill County

Dear Assistant Director Ingalsbe:

Thank you for your letter dated March 17, 2026 acknowledging receipt of the administrative order issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) concerning the property referenced above, which the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) recently purchased.

As a preliminary matter, DEP is aware through public reporting and the “ICE Detention Reengineering Initiative” from February 13, 2026, that ICE is in the process of purchasing facilities to convert into “large-scale detention centers” that will house between 7,000 and 10,000 people and “processing sites” that will house between 1,000 and 1,500 people. The Reengineering Initiative states that ICE aims to fully implement this “new detention model” by September 30, 2026, and to “activate all facilities by November 30, 2026.” Despite ICE’s plans to implement this new initiative on an incredibly expedited timeline, the March 17 letter is the first communication DEP has received from ICE and raises significant concerns as described below.

To start, the Reengineering Initiative states that “ICE is complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the impacts of proposed actions and their reasonable alternatives” and that ICE’s “engineering team reviewed the proposed use and capacities for electricity, water usage, waste exportation, and water capacities for life safety building systems (fire protection systems). Once these capacities were identified, an engineered solution was developed, using standard code compliant methodologies within the design of the facility.”

With respect to water usage, the Reengineering Initiative states that “each facility selection study identified if there was a need for additional fire protection water supply which would exceed the capacities currently in place at the site. While the new building configurations will require additional sprinkler distribution, the general determination was the existing capacities are sufficient to address this minimal new demand.” The Initiative also states that ICE “reviewed the additional

capacities for domestic water supply within each facility, and the engineering assessment indicated the capacities currently at the sites are sufficient to support the new facilities.”

As to wastewater, the Reengineering Initiative acknowledges that facilities will require additional infrastructure but notes that “there are numerous solutions which will be implemented to utilize the existing infrastructure without creating an adverse impact to the water authority infrastructure. To engineer these plans, the design builder will require the engagement and data/capacities from the water authority.”

Although the Reengineering Initiative indicates that ICE has engaged in certain due diligence about the sites it has purchased, DEP has not received record of any of the work ICE has previously done regarding its intended use of the 51 Rausch Creek Road property.

Further, your recent response to DEP conflicts with the ICE statements set forth above, and raises concerns about whether ICE has done due diligence with respect to the 51 Rausch Creek Road commercial warehouse. In particular, you note that plans for water and sewer usage will not be done until April 30, 2026.

Notwithstanding the lack of information provided, ICE has asked for modifications to the administrative orders issued on March 5, 2026. DEP is not able to consider those requests until ICE shares its planning and due diligence work for the 51 Rausch Creek Road property. To evaluate the majority of your requests and provide meaningful responses, DEP must see ICE’s work to date. Those materials should include the NEPA documentation supporting ICE’s finding of “No Detrimental Effect” and all other engineering evaluations and studies that reflect ICE’s plans with respect to water and sewage for the facility. I ask that you submit that information to DEP as soon as possible.

Additionally, if ICE is contemplating purchasing any other facilities in Pennsylvania to convert into detention facilities, please identify those as well as any water and sewer studies ICE has engaged in.

Finally, your letter makes several additional requests, which DEP is responding to below:

- 1. A request to modify the administrative order to allow ICE to consume water at the same level as previously authorized for the warehouse building under the previous owner irrespective of purpose.**

Your request to modify the administrative orders to allow ICE to consume water at the same level as previously authorized cannot be considered in the absence of further information from ICE. As documented in the DEP administrative orders, the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority (SCMA) has experienced water shortages in the Tremont area due to drought conditions. This has happened without SCMA supplying water to the 51 Rausch Creek Road property as the warehouse has been closed for some time. Available information suggests ICE intends to substantially modify the building’s use. Without further information about ICE’s immediate plans for the property, DEP cannot modify the administrative order without considering the actual near-term drinking water demand at the property.

**2. A request to modify the administrative order to allow ICE to generate and dispose of wastewater at the same level previously authorized for the use of the property as a warehouse before ICE seeks an amendment to the Tremont Township Official Sewage Facilities Plan.**

Your request to modify the administrative orders to allow sewage flows from the property without the required planning is not feasible in the absence of further information from ICE. The Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act requires comprehensive sewage planning implemented by local governing bodies and approved by DEP for the purposes of orderly management of sewage that is protective of human health and the environment. *See* 35 P.S. § 750.3. Planning under the Sewage Facilities Act is based on the specific use of the property and the design of adequate sewage treatment systems for that particular use. Available information suggests that ICE intends to substantially modify the building's use. Without further information about ICE's immediate plans for the property, DEP cannot modify the administrative order to allow the sewage flows that had been authorized for a commercial warehouse because ICE's specific use of the property would be drastically different.

**3. A request to extend the time for ICE to submit its written water and sewage plans for the property's use as a detention center because ICE has not finalized them yet and doesn't expect them to be finalized until April 30, 2026.**

As indicated above, the basis for your request to extend the timeframes for submission of ICE's written plans for water and sewage for the detention center at the 51 Rausch Creek Road property appears to conflict with public statements about ICE's due diligence work for the ICE Detention Reengineering Initiative. Submitting to DEP the information gathered and reports prepared for 51 Rausch Creek Road as part of that initiative will better allow DEP to consider your request regarding these deadlines. Without more information, DEP cannot grant your request at this time.

**4. A request to suspend the 30-day period to appeal the DEP administrative orders.**

DEP cannot extend the time for appealing the administrative orders. In Pennsylvania, appeals of DEP final actions are decided by the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board (EHB). The EHB is established by statute as an adjudicatory body independent of DEP. An appeal must be filed and perfected in accordance with the EHB's regulations for it to have jurisdiction. *See* 35 P.S. § 7514(c). The 30-day appeal period is jurisdictional in nature and cannot be extended as a matter of grace. Therefore, DEP cannot extend the time and directs your attention to the appeal instructions stated at the end of the administrative orders.

**5. A request to meet with ICE representatives and municipal representatives to discuss a practicable timeline and process flow for working together to find solutions to the problems DEP has identified in its orders.**

When DEP receives the information requested in this letter, DEP will be in a better position to address your requests and meet with ICE representatives and municipal representatives to discuss timelines and process. I ask that you submit the information as soon as possible. In the meantime, the DEP administrative orders remain as issued.

If you have any questions about the DEP requests contained in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at (570) 825-2521 or [jbuczynski@pa.gov](mailto:jbuczynski@pa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JBuczynski", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joseph J. Buczynski, P.E.  
Regional Director  
Northeast Region

c: Patrick M. Caulfield, P.E., SCMA (via email & U.S. Mail)  
Tremont Township Supervisors (via email & U.S. Mail)