CHARLES F. BASS
2ND DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2350 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-5206
FAX: (202) 225-2946

http://bass.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2902

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, MANUFACTURING, AND TRADE

August 1, 2012

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I write to you to express my strong opposition to your July 26, 2012, proposal to fund a $165 million earmark to acquire the Thomson Correctional Center in Thomson, Illinois. This earmark was not included in the text of any bill voted on by Congress and would divert valuable resources from other important projects authorized by Congress.

You propose to reprogram $151 million from the Assets Forfeiture Fund Super Surplus and to reprogram $14 million from Bureau of Prisons appropriation balances to acquire the Thomson facility. The House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, which oversees appropriations for prisons, does not approve of this proposal. Your proposal would divert much-needed resources away from existing Bureau of Prisons priorities toward an earmark project Congress never even requested. The Bureau is currently in the process of activating four new Federal prisons that will alleviate overcrowding in the system, and any surplus in the Salaries and Expenses account should go toward this existing demand.

The position of Congress on this issue is clear. Not only was this earmark not included in any bill voted on by Congress, but Congress has denied and rescinded funding for this specific acquisition. Last year, the Committee rejected a similar reprogramming request from the Department of Justice, and Congress subsequently rescinded the offsets contained in this proposal. Furthermore, the President's own budget request for Fiscal Year 2013 proposed the rescission of all additional remaining Bureau of Prisons balances allocated for the acquisition of an existing prison, and both the House and Senate appropriations bills adopted this rescission.

I remain strongly opposed to your proposal to fund an earmark rejected by the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies and not included in any bill voted on by Congress. The request to fund Thomson prison would divert much-needed funds from other pressing requirements and circumvents the proper legal process for appropriations.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass

Charles F. Bass
Member of Congress

CONCORD OFFICE:
114 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 200
CONCORD, NH 03301
PHONE: (603) 226-0064

NASHUA OFFICE:
70 EAST PEARL STREET
NASHUA, NH 03060
PHONE: (603) 595-7701

NEWPORT OFFICE:
24 MAIN STREET, SUITE 3
NEWPORT, NH 03773
PHONE: (603) 276-0831

LITTLETON OFFICE:
32 MAIN STREET, ROOM 110
LITTLETON, NH 03561
PHONE: (603) 444-5505

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER