**Letter Regarding New State Psychiatric Hospital**

If you prefer to call the telephone number for the Governor’s Office is 517-373-3400

Honorable Governor Gretchen Whitmer

P.O. Box 30013

Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

Recently, I was informed that the state has decided to hire a consultant to reassess whether construction of the new state psychiatric hospital (under construction at the current facility location near Caro) will proceed. Respectfully, I do not understand why we are starting over, delaying construction and spending more taxpayer money.

Previous extensive research clearly documented that putting this new hospital in the current location was the right decision, not only for residents of Caro, Tuscola County and the entire region, but importantly for all Michiganders. The same sound rationale used in 2017 to build this facility here still applies. As a resident of this part of the state, I respectfully request your support to continue to build the facility here. Constructing it here will preserve patient access to quality care and prevent more economic decline in this economically distressed part of the state.

Preserves Patient Access to Quality Care:

* 70% of current staff travel less than 30 miles to work, 80% of patients are from counties just to the south
* The facility is centrally located for patient transport reducing travel time for family visits
* Employees are trained and provide dedicated caring service to patients
* Hospital and specialty medical providers are near the facility
* The facility has been accepted in the community for over 100 years
* Quality water can be made available to the new hospital

Prevents Further Economic Decline in this Distressed Part of the State:

* The state already eliminated area jobs with the closure of a state prison
* $54 million annually is infused into the area economy from this facility
* It is the second largest employer in the county with 350 direct and 398 indirect jobs
* An economic impact study shows the unemployment rate would double with loss of this facility
* County bond rating would decline increasing costs to borrow funds
* Job losses would dramatically drive down land values and the ability to provide services
* Population has been declining for years, the loss of this facility would compound this problem
* School enrollments have dramatically declined making it difficult to provide quality education and moving this facility would intensify this problem

Our businesses, schools, and every man, woman and child living in our communities are dependent upon the facility remaining here in Caro. Our rural economy already has significant weaknesses. The prospect of this facility leaving and losing more jobs would be devastating and overwhelmingly compound our economic challenges. The community desperately needs and deserves the new facility to be built here to retain these jobs. Please help our families, friends and neighbors maintain their livelihood by constructing the new State Psychiatric Facility in Tuscola County.

Governor Whitmer, please put this project back on track to resume construction at the current location. The previous decision to build the facility in the current location was well reasoned and will best serve the residents of this great state. The funds are budgeted, the project is started and substantial state and local investments have already been made. It is the right location for the reasons explained above. We need to move forward and get this project done.

Thank you for review of this matter of critical importance to this part of the state.

Sincerely,