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SHERIFF OF ERIE COUNTY

June 3, 2026

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The Honorable
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin St.
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Locking Mechanism Malfunctions at Holding Center

Honorable Members:

As a follow-up to my May 15, 2026 letter, I wanted to make you aware of a specific issue that has become a growing concern of mine in recent weeks. I regularly inform you, as I did three weeks ago, of the large number of unusable jail cells at the Erie County Holding Center due to various mechanical, electrical and plumbing-related problems. As of today, that number is 155, up 19 since I last wrote to you.

The failure of locking mechanisms on cells in the linear portion of the Holding Center can be blamed for a worryingly increasing proportion of those out-of-service units. We presently have 17 cells that we are unable to use for this reason. When a locking mechanism fails, it is often because the motor has failed. We are required to lock a unit down, remove paneling so that we can access the motor and try to put it back together. We cannot use the cell if we are unable to do so, as these particular motors are not manufactured anymore. As is the case with all of the other problems that render cells inoperable, my team is working in lockstep with Buildings and Grounds staff to address the issue.

I will keep you apprised of this situation as it continues to develop.

Very Truly Yours,

John C. Garcia
Sheriff of Erie County

cc: Mark Poloncarz, Erie County Executive
William Geary, Commissioner of Public Works
Tracy Cichocki, Deputy Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds
Mark Cornell, Director of Budget and Management
Joseph Noeth, Superintendent of Jail Management