

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 29, 2020

Mr. James Janecka  
Warden, Adelanto ICE Processing Center  
10400 Rancho Road  
Adelanto, CA 92301

Dear Warden Janecka:

On June 15, we sent a letter to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) seeking answers to allegations raised by the Freedom for Immigrants and the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice regarding the improper use of a toxic cleaning agent at Adelanto Detention Center (Adelanto) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Advocates claim the cleaning agent, referred to as HDQ Neutral, is being indiscriminately used throughout the facility without regard for the manufacturer's safety instructions dictating its use. In light of these troubling allegations, we sought and continue to seek clarity and information on the usage of this chemical within Adelanto.

While we have significant concerns about the spread of COVID-19 within these facilities and understand that measures must be taken to prevent infection, any abatement must be done with the safety and well-being of the people involved at heart.

Reports have circulated claiming staff have indiscriminately applied the cleaning agent in common areas, living areas, and bathrooms in Adelanto with little to no ventilation. The manufacturers of HDQ Neutral, the Spartan Chemical Company, have issued strict guidelines regarding the use of the chemical. According to the Spartan Chemical Company, HDQ Neutral is hazardous when ingested or inhaled and should be used only outdoors or in well-ventilated areas. The inherent congregate nature of the Adelanto facility poses risks to detainees and a detainee's inability to limit one's exposure to the chemical is contrary to these warnings. Thus, the responsibility falls on the facility operators to ensure the safety of these detainees.

ICE responded to our initial inquiry in a letter dated July 8, 2020. ICE's response failed to provide specific information regarding detainees and any side effects correlated with exposure to HDQ Neutral. Although ICE claims to foster the highest standard of cleanliness and sanitation, reports from advocates are contrary to ICE's official position on the matter. While we do not question the compliance of HDQ Neutral with regard to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards, we do question the frequency and practices with which the chemical is being used indoors and around detainees.

On July 13, 2020, The Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border Security, Facilities and Operations held a virtual hearing where the GEO Group CEO, Mr. George Zoley, testified about the use of HDQ Neutral. As you know, the Adelanto Detention Center is owned and operated by the GEO Group and Mr. Zoley stated "The HDQ Neutral cleaning product has been used at the Adelanto facilities as well as other facilities for 9 years and never reported any adverse effects by anyone." Our understanding based on advocate reports is that a number of detainees have experienced a range of adverse effects such as rashes, headaches, nausea in light of the exaggerated usage of HDQ Neutral.

Mr. Zoley did not commit to halting the use of HDQ Neutral within the facility, again claiming the product has been used at the Adelanto facility for 9 years. However, if it is true that the sudden increase and exaggerated use is causing harsh side effects for detainees, we must urge its usage be halted immediately. Mr. Zoley also stated unequivocally that the chemical will be used in line with manufacturer guidelines.

It is no secret the number of positive COVID-19 cases continues to rise in the United States at a rapid rate. As these cases continue to rise, it is imperative that the cases be mitigated and controlled in all congregate settings, and the Adelanto facility is no exception. The safety and well-being of these detainees must take precedent over all else.

We respectfully request the answers to the following questions no later than August 24, 2020:

1. Where is the HDQ Neutral chemical specifically being used in the facility?
2. What type of detailed instruction do staff and detainees receive regarding the use of HDQ Neutral? How often and frequently are instructions distributed to both staff and detainees?
3. Roughly how many times per day are staff and detainees instructed to use the chemical?
4. Which alternatives, if any, are being used within Adelanto?
5. What, if any, is the established system in place for management of the chemical? Please be specific. Is new personal protective equipment available each time a detainee or staff handles the cleaning chemical?
6. How many detainees have reported suffering from rashes, nosebleeds, headaches and fatigues since the COVID-19 began? For how long have these symptoms been occurring? When did the symptoms begin? How does this compare to standard practices prior to COVID-19?

Should you have any questions about this request, please contact [Adrienne.Castro@mail.house.gov](mailto:Adrienne.Castro@mail.house.gov) at (202) 225 - 2305 or [Eddie.Meyer@mail.house.gov](mailto:Eddie.Meyer@mail.house.gov) at (202) 225 – 8045.

Sincerely,



MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress



JUAN VARGAS  
Member of Congress