

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

February 27, 2026

The Honorable Joseph V. Cuffari  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Office of Inspector General  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Inspector General Cuffari:

We write to demand answers and an investigation into U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's proposed purchase of a vacant warehouse located at 29 Elizabeth Drive, 10918 in the Village of Chester, New York, for use as an immigration detention facility.

Let us say it plainly from the start: our community strongly rejects this proposal.<sup>1</sup> We are not aware of a single local elected official – Democrat or Republican – who supports this plan. Local leaders have repeatedly said they were not briefed substantively at any point.<sup>2</sup>

Since our offices first learned of this plan through public reporting and constituent outreach—not through any communication from ICE—the process has been plagued by contradictory and inaccurate statements from federal officials, a complete lack of transparency, and overwhelming community opposition.<sup>3</sup> Communication with our offices has been equally unacceptable. In December, in his official capacity as a member of the United States House of Representatives, Congressman Ryan sent ICE a request for information demanding answers about the proposed Chester facility.<sup>4</sup> After nearly a month's delay, ICE refused to provide any information. In addition, our community's petition opposing the Chester facility has continued to grow, and hundreds of local residents have gathered peacefully at meetings to express their opposition—yet bipartisan local officials have still heard nothing from ICE.<sup>5,6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Fumagalli, B. (2026, January 14). *Local officials decry proposed ICE facility*. Chronicle Newspaper .

<https://www.chroniclenewspaper.com/news/local-news/local-officials-decry-proposed-ice-facility-XJ5469088>

<sup>2</sup> Mishanec, N. (2026, January 16). *Orange County executive will oppose Hudson Valley ICE facility*. Times Union.

<https://www.timesunion.com/hudsonvalley/news/article/orange-county-oppose-ice-facility-chester-21297237.php>

<sup>3</sup> Aiello, T. (2026, January 13). *Possible ICE detention center in Orange County, N.Y., has residents concerned*.

*Here's what we know*. Cbsnews.com. <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/ice-detention-center-chester-orange-county-new-york/>

<sup>4</sup> *CONGRESSMAN PAT RYAN RAISES THE ALARM ON REPORTED LEASED OFFICE SPACE IN NEW WINDSOR FOR ICE OPERATIONS, DEMANDS URGENT ANSWERS FROM AGENCY AND DHS SECRETARY NOEM*. (2026, February 11). Congressman Pat Ryan. <https://patryan.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-pat-ryan-raises-alarm-reported-leased-office-space-new-windsor-ice>

<sup>5</sup> Welber, B. (2026, February 17). *Hundreds Protest "Secret" ICE Office Inside The Hudson Valley*. Hudson Valley Post. <https://hudsonvalleypost.com/protest-held-outside-reported-secret-ice-office-in-hudson-valley/>

<sup>6</sup> *CONGRESSMAN PAT RYAN SUBMITS PETITION WITH OVER 10,000 SIGNATURES TO DHS, COMMUNITY BACKLASH TO ICE FACILITY CONTINUES TO GROW*. (2026, January 21). Congressman Pat Ryan. <https://patryan.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-pat-ryan-submits-petition-over-10000-signatures-dhs-community>

These failures raise serious concerns that warrant immediate independent review by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General.

To date, the community has received no clear or consistent information regarding the status or development of the proposed detention center. ICE initially told multiple media outlets that it had already purchased the warehouse, presenting the project as a settled fact.<sup>7</sup> Almost immediately, that claim unraveled.<sup>8</sup> County property records showed no sale, no deed transfer, and no filings of any kind. Local officials publicly confirmed they had never been contacted by ICE and described the supposed purchase as a rumor. Only after sustained public scrutiny did ICE reverse course, issuing a late-night statement admitting that its original claim was false and had been sent “without proper approval.”<sup>8</sup>

In the span of a single week, ICE went from asserting ownership of a detention site, to being unable to substantiate that claim, to fully retracting it—leaving residents and local governments in the dark about whether the project was abandoned, paused, or continuing behind closed doors.

This is not a minor communications failure. It reflects a disturbing systemic breakdown within DHS and ICE regarding who authorizes major detention decisions, how information is verified before being released, and whether affected communities are owed notice at all. ICE officials falsely claimed they had acquired a detention facility capable of holding up to 1,500 people, sparking public alarm and disrupting local governance.<sup>7</sup> Quietly walking back, that statement without accountability is entirely unacceptable and unbecoming of a federal agency.<sup>8</sup>

This is not a marginal oversight lapse—it is an alarming display of a core governance failure.

As the Inspector General for U.S. Department of Homeland Security, you have a statutory obligation under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) to investigate allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and potential conflicts of interest within DHS components, including ICE—particularly where federal funds, procurement decisions, and public accountability are at issue.

We therefore request that your office conduct a comprehensive and independent review examining ICE’s proposed acquisition and development of the facility located at *29 Elizabeth Drive, Chester, New York 10918*, including the following:

**1. Verification of property acquisition claims**

1. Investigate whether ICE did in fact purchase or attempted to purchase the facility at **29 Elizabeth Drive, Chester, NY 10918**.
2. Examine property records, deeds, contracts, and any financial transactions.

**2. Accuracy, consistency, and dissemination of public communications**

1. Assess why contradictory or inaccurate statements regarding the facility were issued.
2. Evaluate whether these misstatements were isolated incidents or reflect a systemic failure in information management.

---

<sup>7</sup> Silva, M. M. (2026, February 13). *ICE says it bought Hudson Valley warehouse, but county has no record*. Times Union. <https://www.timesunion.com/hudsonvalley/news/article/ice-warehouse-chester-purchase-site-21350937.php>

<sup>8</sup> Mishanec, N. (2026, February 18). *ICE retracts false claim that it purchased Hudson Valley warehouse*. Times Union. <https://www.timesunion.com/hudsonvalley/news/article/ice-mistake-warehouse-chester-false-21359388.php>

3. **Transparency and engagement with local communities and stakeholders**
  1. Investigate the extent to which ICE communicated with local officials, residents, and other stakeholders prior to announcing the project.
  2. Determine whether the agency violated policies or best practices for informing affected communities about significant enforcement and detention actions.
  3. Assess how the lack of transparency affected public trust and the community's ability to respond or provide input.
  
4. **Compliance with procurement, financial, and federal acquisition rules**
  1. Determine whether ICE followed federal laws and DHS regulations governing procurement, leasing, and acquisition of real property.
  2. Review use and obligation of federal funds for the proposed project, including approvals, accounting, and documentation.
  3. Examine whether proper audits, reviews, or legal clearances were conducted before public statements were made.
  
5. **Internal controls, accountability, and oversight mechanisms**
  1. Examine whether existing DHS and ICE oversight, auditing, and compliance systems failed to detect or prevent the false statements, lack of transparency, or potential misuse of authority.
  2. Recommend measures to prevent recurrence, strengthen accountability, and ensure transparency in future detention-related decisions.

We respectfully request a written response to our demand that a comprehensive and independent review be conducted of ICE's proposed acquisition, as outlined in this letter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Patrick K. Ryan  
Member of Congress