



March 20, 2017

Dear Ben,

I am very disheartened at the process you went through to select possible sites for the homeless shelter in Salt Lake County. You had the audacity to spring an announcement on the cities through social media, with the only notification being that you would be making the announcement. Then when the cities pushed back saying they were never consulted in the decision, you had the nerve to say you had been studying the problem for two and a half years and couldn't understand why we would be upset. This is why - you NEVER consulted the cities in that two and a half year study! The more I hear about the process, the more it sounds like the "smoke-filled back room deals" of old Chicago politics. What ever happened to the "transparency" that the state government has been insisting on for the last several years?

You know me. We have campaigned together and for each other. I don't get upset easily, but this entire process and trying to pass the responsibility off to other entities stinks. Is the support of legislative leadership so important to you that you can't see beyond the immediate future? I can't imagine that you would even consider participating in such an affair. But here it is, staring West Valley City in the face - three possible sites for a new shelter, none of which fulfill the criteria you set, according to your information, at the beginning of the process, with a legislative mandate telling us we have no authority to legally alter or amend your decision.

I am not saying that we oppose bringing a shelter in to West Valley City, but lets do it in a dignified way. Sit down together and look at sites that will not affect the surrounding neighborhoods in a negative way. Look for sites that are not within three blocks of elementary schools, handicapped adult day care centers, churches, a mosque, and businesses that will be negatively affected by scavengers on their property.

Ben, my friend, look beyond the instant and see what this will do to you both personally and politically and be strong enough to stand up to legislators who try to run roughshod over the local government.

Sincerely,

Don Christensen  
West Valley City Councilmember At-Large