

A TALE OF WOE, ICE STYLE

QUICK STATS

- ✘ **CONFERENCE:** Spending
- ✘ **TEAM:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- **FUMBLE:** \$6 million to repair a building that remains unsafe
- **HOW TO RECOVER THE BALL:** ICE should conduct a cost-benefit analysis and a feasibility study before renovating an existing building, where the cost could exceed \$1 million

Talk about a tale of woe! In San Pedro (essentially Los Angeles, CA), ICE used a former Service Processing Center to house detainees until it had to close due to safety concerns. Then ICE decided to move employees back into the building while it processed and held illegal immigrants temporarily.

In 2012 USACE found the San Pedro Processing Center to be unsafe and recommended ICE move out completely.²⁰ In 2014 the IG visited the facility and recommended ICE vacate the building until the safety issues were corrected. ICE finally complied.²¹

Between 2008 and 2014, ICE spent about \$4.2 million to repair the building, and it was still unsafe for occupancy when the IG visited in 2014.²² In 2015 ICE awarded another \$1.6 million to retry to make the building safe.²³ Although ICE wanted to repair the entire facility, it failed to develop a long-term plan to address all of the problems with the building. Instead ICE attempted a patchwork of repairs and renovations in a series of small projects. Fast forward to the present day, and ICE still has an unserviceable building at a cost of \$6 million.²⁴

The tale of woe continues for ICE because the facility may have limited utility moving forward, even if ICE manages to make it safe and serviceable. Since it was designed to hold detainees, there is not enough parking to make it suitable for office space. Worse still, there are no electrical outlets, and the walls are three feet thick.²⁵

RECOVERY

Before dropping any additional federal dollars into this building, ICE needs to settle on a long-term plan. Does ICE really need this building, or is it better to just start over? It is frustrating that ICE wasted the \$6 million, but demolishing the building and starting over might be more cost-effective in the long run. This tale of woe could have been prevented with a little planning, a cost-benefit analysis, and a basic feasibility study. Everyday Americans know the value of having a plan before starting a big project. Without a plan projects get expensive and inefficient very quickly. It is time the federal government learned the same lesson.

For more information, please visit:

[OIG: Follow-up to Management Alert – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Facility, San Pedro, California](#)

[OIG: Management Alert: Employee Safety at the San Pedro Processing Center](#)