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Jail Population Agreement Reached

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An agreement that would raise the inmate population at the Front Street jail by 11 prisoners has been reached by county attorneys and an attorney who has challenged the county's policy of busing excess prisoners out-of-county.

Terry Slocum, assistant county counsel, said today that he and attorney Sara Clarenbach have agreed to the increase of prisoner populations at the jail.

Clarenbach has represented inmates at the jail in a long-standing suit against inadequate conditions at the jail.

In an amended motion, Clarenbach charged that busing prisoners to the San Bruno facility violated their constitutional rights. Repeated attacks and beatings at the facility prompted the action.

After a hearing on the proposal to stop busing to the facility, Federal District Court Judge Robert Peckham ordered the two attorneys to confer and see if a compromise could be worked out. The compromise agreement is expected to be sent to Peckham today for his signature, said Slocum.

The busing of prisoners began after Peckham set a population cap on the jail to prevent overcrowding and poor conditions at the Front Street jail.

Since that time, remodelings have increased the capacity for prisoners, but some were still being sent to San Bruno. Raising the prisoner population should eliminate some of the busing.

Slocum also said San Francisco Undersheriff James Denman has agreed to look into measures that may provide better security for Santa Cruz prisoners at the San Bruno facility.

Santa Cruz County Sheriff Al Noren has been asked to get together with Denman to work out the details of increased protection, said Slocum.