



Chairman Ken Calvert

*Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Statement of Interior & Environment Subcommittee
Chairman Ken Calvert
Smithsonian Institution, FY19 Budget Hearing
Dr. David Skorton, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
Thursday, April 12, 2018
*As Prepared***

Dr. Skorton, I'd like to welcome you to today's hearing. We appreciate you joining us this morning to share your vision for the future of the Smithsonian and to discuss your budget priorities for fiscal year 2019.

The Members and staff are also grateful that you have brought some interesting historical items for "show and tell." It is always one of the highlights of our hearing season. I have said this before but it bears repeating -- you clearly have one of the most interesting jobs in town!

As the Secretary of the Smithsonian, you are entrusted with the challenging responsibility of operating and managing one of our country's most revered institutions. The Smithsonian is often referred to as "America's attic" because you are the steward of more than 155 million objects in a national collection that reflects America's artistic, cultural, and scientific heritage.

The Smithsonian provides education and outreach programs in science, history, art, and culture for visitors and scholars worldwide. It is governed by a Board of Regents consisting of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Vice President, nine private citizens, and six members of Congress—including our good friend, Tom Cole, who serves on this subcommittee.

Overall, the proposed funding level in the Smithsonian's fiscal year 2019 budget request is \$957 million. The budget request supports salaries and expenses and essential facilities maintenance. It also continues the National Air & Space Museum renovation project and supports other critical priority construction and deferred maintenance projects.

Like most large organizations, the Smithsonian faces some enormous challenges which we will be discussing at some length today. At the top of the list, of course, is the multi-year renovation of the National Air and Space Museum.

As a result of the budget agreement earlier this year, the Interior Subcommittee was provided additional funding in its final fiscal year 2018 allocation that enabled us to provide more than double the amount requested for this critical revitalization project. We look forward to hearing in detail how

the \$198 million provided in the Omnibus will be invested and what additional funds in fiscal year 2019 and future years will be required to complete this revitalization project.

The recent construction of the Museum of African American History and Culture and the proposed renovation of the National Air and Space Museum illustrate the very real challenges this subcommittee faces: there continues to be an increasing demand for Federal dollars to address many important and legitimate priorities. For this reason, it is essential that the Smithsonian clearly outline and communicate its highest and greatest priorities throughout the Appropriations process.

Secretary Skorton, as I pledged to you the last time we met, this subcommittee will do its very best to address the Smithsonian's most urgent priorities. We support your outstanding efforts and we look forward to your testimony and continuing our work together.

I'm now happy to yield to my good friend and our subcommittee's ranking member, Mrs. McCollum, for any opening remarks she'd like to make.