

Chairman Ander Crenshaw
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
House Committee on Appropriations
General Services Administration Oversight Hearing
March 19, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Welcome to our Subcommittee Members and to our witness, Acting Administrator Dan Tangherlini, of the General Services Administration. Welcome all of you and thank you for your public service and that of your staff.

Last year GSA made headlines for all the wrong reasons:

- lavish spending on conferences, food, and entertainment;
- employees accepting gifts from inappropriate sources;
- excessive spending on relocation expenses, travel for virtual employees, and employee award programs; and
- most troubling, non-compliance with Federal procurement law.

GSA is supposed to be the Federal government's procurement expert, but disregard for procurement laws, regulations, and policies is how GSA got into trouble.

I am committed to preventing profligacy from taking root again at GSA and I know you to be, too. Each of you are here today because you are committed to expelling waste and extravagance from GSA and to making GSA more efficient and accountable.

This Committee appreciates your commitment but I believe Congress needs to continue to closely oversee your activities to ensure that the funds entrusted to GSA are spent appropriately. In order for our bill to move through the appropriations process, we will need to convince Members on both sides of the aisle that GSA has changed.

For years, this Subcommittee has been pushing GSA to make better use of its existing portfolio of buildings and, to that end, we included a square foot limitation on GSA's inventory of leased and owned space in our 2013 House bill. As such, I was heartened to learn on Thursday that the Administration is working on how to implement a freeze of the Federal government's real estate footprint.

The next step is to reduce the Federal footprint. Staffing levels at Federal agencies are falling and, with that, so are their office space requirements. In combination with disposing of surplus properties, a reduction in GSA's real estate portfolio is within reach. We are not here today to discuss the 2014 budget, but I am hopeful that initiatives like freezing the footprint are incorporated into the President's budget request and will result in reduction in the Federal Buildings Fund's expenses.

I hope, together with our staff, we can work closely to unlock the potential for hundreds of millions dollars of savings each year through improved property management and procurement. If we can, then we can restore the American public's trust in your agency.

Once again, welcome, Acting Administrator Tangherlini. I appreciate your service and look forward to your testimony.

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