

STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL GELBER
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE
U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

April 12, 2018

Good morning Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Correa, and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Michael Gelber, and I am the Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Public Buildings Service. Thank you for inviting me to discuss the ongoing consolidation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) headquarters operations on the St. Elizabeths campus in Washington, DC.

GSA's mission is to deliver value and savings in real estate, acquisition, technology, and other mission-support services across the Federal Government. Given the current fiscal environment, GSA is working with agencies on multiple fronts to reduce and optimize the Federal Government's real estate footprint. This work includes reducing customer agency space requirements, improving space utilization, reducing real estate costs and delivering space that allows our Federal partners to more efficiently and effectively carry out their missions.

For more than a decade, GSA has worked with DHS, and other Executive Branch offices, Congress, the city of Washington, DC, community organizations, and others to deliver a consolidated DHS headquarters at St. Elizabeths. By substantially reducing DHS's more than 45 headquarters locations in the National Capital Region, the Department's mission effectiveness will be enhanced through co-location. This will strengthen the Department's internal and external communication, coordination, and responsiveness.

The U.S. Coast Guard's move from Federally leased space into the Federally owned and controlled Douglas A. Munro Coast Guard Headquarters Building is an excellent example of the real and potential benefits of consolidation efforts at St. Elizabeths. The on-time - and within budget - completion of the Munro building delivered a modern secure headquarters to the Coast Guard while eliminating five leases in privately owned facilities from the Federal Government's real estate portfolio.

In addition to the completion of the Munro building, GSA and DHS have delivered a central utility plant which, when the current expansion is complete, will meet the energy distribution needs of current and future campus occupants. A secure campus perimeter needed for all the planned operations at St. Elizabeths is in place, and GSA completed a 2,000 vehicle parking garage in August 2013.

The current phase of the DHS consolidation is the adaptive reuse of the historic Center Building. In April 2019, the DHS Secretary and Executive Leadership are scheduled to move from the Nebraska Avenue Complex in Northwest Washington to St. Elizabeths.

To mitigate traffic congestion in and around St. Elizabeths, GSA is working with the District of Columbia's Department of Transportation to construct new access road extensions along with the reconstruction of the Interstate 295/Malcolm X Avenue interchange. This infrastructure work is in addition to the Metro and shuttle buses that already serve St. Elizabeths and/or the surrounding area.

The key challenge faced by GSA with regard to this project is that constraints and uncertainties surrounding project funding have been a significant determinant to the delivery of the consolidated headquarters project. GSA's appropriations requests, which totaled over \$400 million for the construction of a headquarters for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), other DHS components, and additional campus infrastructure improvements, were not funded in either Fiscal Year 2017 or 2018. Collectively, delays in appropriations have lengthened the scheduled completion date for the campus years beyond the Enhanced Plan completion date of FY 2021.

As a result, GSA is now working with DHS to update the Master Plan to address the lack of recent appropriations, the schedule of DHS commercial lease expirations, and incorporate lessons learned from the adaptive reuse of historic campus buildings.

In closing, to maximize the investment taxpayers have already made in the campus infrastructure, GSA and DHS must continue to consolidate, in a cost effective manner, as many DHS components and employees as possible onto St. Elizabeths. For that reason, we urge the members of this Subcommittee to seek full funding for the President's Fiscal Year 2019 request for St. Elizabeths of \$229 million for the construction of a headquarters for FEMA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to answering your questions.