

Wednesday, March 13, 2013
Congressman Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11th)
Member Statement re: FBI Headquarters Consolidation
Hearing hosted by the T&I Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and
Emergency Management

Chairman Barletta and Ranking Member Holmes Norton,

Thank you for holding today's hearing on the FBI's proposal to consolidate its dispersed local workforce into a new campus-like headquarters in the National Capital Region. I appreciate the opportunity to testify as I represent a Northern Virginia district in which a significant portion of the FBI's workforce resides and which is home to sites that would be particularly well-suited to the FBI's needs. I share the subcommittee's desire to ensure the best use and value for taxpayer dollars, and I have no doubt that a fair and open competition will allow us to achieve that result.

The J. Edgar Hoover Building is an iconic landmark here in our nation's capital, but the aging building no longer meets the Bureau's operational and security needs, which have expanded since 9/11. It houses just 52% of the FBI's headquarters staff with the rest dispersed among 21 leased locations throughout the region. This situation has led to inefficiencies and redundancies that do not support an agile 21st century law enforcement workforce. The FBI estimates consolidating its operations and personnel in one location could reduce its current footprint by as much as 1 million square feet and yield annual savings of about \$60 million.

Multiple locations in Virginia would suit the FBI's needs and offer strategic benefits to its workforce and taxpayers. Virginia already is home to a majority of the FBI's workforce and several of its critical operations, including the FBI Training Academy and Laboratory at Quantico, the Northern Virginia Resident Agency in Prince William County, and the future Central Records Complex in Winchester. Proximity to those operations would benefit the headquarters staff and reduce cross-regional traffic. A Virginia location also would offer proximity to the National Counterterrorism Center and the CIA, creating a nexus of national security operations and facilitating improved collaboration. In addition, a location in Northern Virginia would provide easier access to the metropolitan region's premier international gateway at Dulles International Airport.

One site, in particular, that I believe warrants serious consideration is a property the federal government already owns, the GSA's own warehouse facility in Springfield. The 70-acre property is grossly underutilized when you consider its location at the center of the regional transit and road network, including Metro rail and bus, Virginia Railway Express, Interstate 95, and the Fairfax County Parkway. In the current climate of austerity, I don't think we can afford to overlook a parcel that we already control and that offers so many strategic advantages.

I also proudly represent neighboring Prince William County, which has put forth a proposal with great merit as well, but it and other sites in the National Capital Region would not meet the narrow set of criteria in the Senate's authorizing resolution. That resolution specifies that any potential property be located within 2 miles of a Metro station and within 2.5 miles of the Capital Beltway. As the Subcommittee's own staff report notes, such criteria "could significantly limit competition." The GSA, by comparison, did not include such criteria in its Request for Information, which has generated 35 proposals from the public and private sectors, demonstrating a high level of interest that could yield innovative solutions.

While proximity to transit would be preferable, I respectfully request that the Subcommittee not arbitrarily limit the scope of its companion Resolution and consider amended guidance. If this process moves forward in an open, competitive fashion in which the merits of each proposal can be weighed side-by-side, I have every confidence that a location in the Commonwealth of Virginia will prevail. The Virginia delegation is committed to working in a bipartisan fashion with the Subcommittee, the FBI, and GSA to ensure that we find the best location to meet the Bureau's operational and security needs and to achieve the best value for taxpayers.