

**STATEMENT BY DOROTHY ROBYN, COMMISSIONER,
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BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PUBLIC BUILDINGS & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
OF THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

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Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Norton, and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Dorothy Robyn. I am Commissioner of the General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service. It is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to appear before you.

Under new leadership, GSA has refocused on its mission of delivering the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology service to government and the American people. In the Public Buildings Service, GSA is using the authorities Congress gave us to leverage private capital to deliver better and more efficient space to our partner federal agencies.

One example of this new approach is the subject of today's hearing. In early December, we issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking private sector input on exchanging the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover Building—an outdated but valuable property on Pennsylvania Avenue—for the construction of a new headquarters somewhere in the National Capital Region.

In my testimony today, I would like to explain why the existing FBI headquarters building is no longer suitable to meet the agency's needs, how we hope to utilize the exchange process to obtain a replacement facility that will allow the FBI to achieve its mission in the most cost effective manner, and the benefits this effort will have in advancing GSA's commitment to creating a more efficient and sustainable federal building inventory.

Why is the J. Edgar Hoover Building no longer suitable as a headquarters facility for the FBI?

The answer to this question encompasses challenges with the building's design, the changes that have occurred in the FBI's mission since 9/11 and the very real challenges of modifying the building to accommodate current and future FBI needs and requirements.

The Hoover building opened in 1974. This was an era in which the FBI was primarily a law enforcement agency. The building was designed to store vast amounts of paper documents. It included a crime lab and a firing range. It was intended to be accessible to the general public, both for formal tours and for access to a second floor outdoor veranda located on top of space intended to house street-level retail establishments along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Remarkable for a building this new, the Hoover building has a gross area of 2.4 million square feet, but only 1.3 million square feet are usable to house FBI personnel and equipment. As a result, this facility now accommodates only a portion of the FBI's D.C. staff.

It also is structured in such a way that is largely incompatible with close collaboration of various staff and operations. It has interior walls of cement block lining corridors wide enough to accommodate the movement of large blocks of paper files. Whereas the FBI is making great strides in developing collaborative work spaces in its field offices around the country, there is limited ability to do that here.

The FBI's evolving mission encompasses combating new world threats including those posed by terrorism and breaches in cybersecurity. As such, consideration needs to be given to achieving the secure perimeter setback that is advised under the Interagency Security Committee's standards.

So, where do we go from here?

On December 3, 2012, GSA issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking to tap the expertise of the real estate community on alternatives for replacing the J. Edgar Hoover building. Responses were due on March 4, at the beginning of this week, and we are now in the process of evaluating them.

We are prepared to "exchange" the Hoover building for a new facility of up to 2.1 million square feet that would consolidate personnel from the Hoover building and multiple leased locations.

What do I mean by "exchange"?

The exchange concept is one tool for GSA to dispose of our properties that are not meeting the Federal need, allowing us to leverage the equity of some of our buildings in the inventory to get new and highly efficient ones. Already we have put in motion a number of potential real property exchanges that can provide considerable savings to taxpayers.

In Los Angeles, we announced that we are pursuing the exchange of an outdated Courthouse for a new, highly efficient Federal building. Here in the National Capital Region, in addition to our FBI initiative, we are seeking ideas from the real estate community to exchange five existing federal buildings in Southwest Washington for new federal workspace and an innovative, mixed use eco-district.

These initiatives are part of a broader effort to more fully utilize all of GSA's existing authorities and realize the benefits to business, government, and communities.

Our FBI RFI is seeking the best ideas from the private sector for meeting the FBI headquarters needs and leveraging the value of the current headquarters site on

Pennsylvania Avenue. If an exchange were to occur, we would transfer title in fee simple for the Hoover Building in return for a new facility. This could involve a developer offering to build a new facility on land he or she owns, or build on land the government owns or acquires, or exchange for an existing building.

Based upon information that we obtain, we may issue a Request for Proposals. If there is a successful offeror, we would also expect the successful bidder to accommodate FBI staff housed in the Hoover Building until the new facility was ready for occupancy.

At the end of the process, the developer would own the Hoover Building, and we would own its replacement facility.

Throughout this process, we have not focused on a single location in the National Capital Region.

If we are correct, the Pennsylvania Avenue site has potential for higher and better use than as the headquarters of a Federal agency. This property, we think, should produce significant value toward creating a new FBI headquarters facility.

In addition, a new facility would advance GSA's efforts to create a more sustainable inventory of federal assets. We propose to consolidate as many as 11,000 FBI employees now occupying a total of 3 million square feet of space into a much smaller Federal footprint.

I anticipate that this is but one of many conversations we will have about our efforts to find a suitable headquarters for the FBI, and our exploration of alternative mechanisms to find innovative ways to enable our federal customers to carry out their agency missions at less cost to the American taxpayer.

Thank you for inviting me here today, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.