Statement of the Honorable Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP
Architect of the Capitol

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Architect of the Capitol Fiscal Year 2017 Appropriations

Statement before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

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Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Schatz, and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and discuss the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 budget request.

The AOC values our unique mission to *serve* Congress and the Supreme Court, *preserve* the historic facilities and grounds of the Capitol campus and *inspire* generations of Americans through art and architecture.

Thanks to your support, 2016 promises to be a banner year as several major projects are scheduled for completion. These projects mark important milestones in our ongoing efforts to preserve our infrastructure, enhance the beauty of our historic buildings and improve safety and security for all employees and visitors.

WORKERS PREPARE THE ROTUNDA'S COFFERED DOME FOR NEW PAINT.

By the 2017 Presidential Inauguration, work on our most visible projects, the Dome and Rotunda restoration, will be complete.

Work progresses on the restoration of the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial, accessibility improvements to Bartholdi Park and a structural safety analysis on the clouds component of the Alexander Calder Mountains and Clouds sculpture in the Hart Senate Office Building. All of these initiatives are nearing completion.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER EXTERIOR DOOR REPLACEMENT.

At the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center (CVC), 2016 will bring the installation of lighter weight entrance and exit doors to ease access for the more than 2 million annual visitors. We are also extremely proud of the CVC's Rotunda App, which was recently honored by ADOBE in their public service category for "Most engaging citizen-facing campaign." ADOBE lauded the App for providing "Videos, infographics, photography, and historical illustrations [that] provide the next best experience to actually touring in person."

Off campus, we are constructing new storage space for precious Library of Congress collections at the Fort George G. Meade military installation in Maryland.

These examples illustrate the broad range of the AOC's unique mission responsibilities and our focus on strategic investments to update and improve our facilities. They are also compelling examples of the need for a sustained, significant investment in our deteriorating infrastructure. Deferring investment results in critical damage that only gets worse with time. Without immediate attention, problems become costlier to repair, more intrusive to Congress' daily operations and a campus that is less available to our visitors.

People First, Safety Always

We take seriously the responsibility to protect the physical and human resources entrusted to our care. Our commitment to excellence is buoyed by our steadfast efforts to maintain a safe, effective workplace for Congress and a welcoming destination that millions of Americans visit and enjoy all year long.

THE CAPITOL BUILDING PAINT BRANCH PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE SAFETY BANNISTER IN PREPARATION FOR POPE FRANCIS' VISIT.

With a staff of more than 2,100, AOC employees are our most precious resource. These highly dedicated and talented employees are sought out by other agencies and by people across the nation and around the world to share their unique expertise and knowledge. Imparting best practices in risk assessment, and partnering on quality contracting procedures, top notch professionals strive to meet our goals and performance metrics year-after-year.

In order for our employees to succeed and continue to deliver positive results, increased resources are required for necessary projects identified by the AOC. The U.S. Capitol and the buildings that make up the Capitol campus are losing key elements – such as stone, cast iron and bronze – that define these iconic symbols of democracy and are critical to their structural integrity. **The resulting impact is that a quarter of our buildings are in poor condition, according to our Facility Condition Index.**

Restorations are necessary not only to preserve these symbols of American democracy but also to ensure the health and safety of those who work at and visit the Capitol campus each day. Safety and state-of-good-repair upgrades are the centerpiece of our FY 2017 budget request of $694.3 million that emphasizes prioritization, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability to provide the most beneficial and economical use of funding.

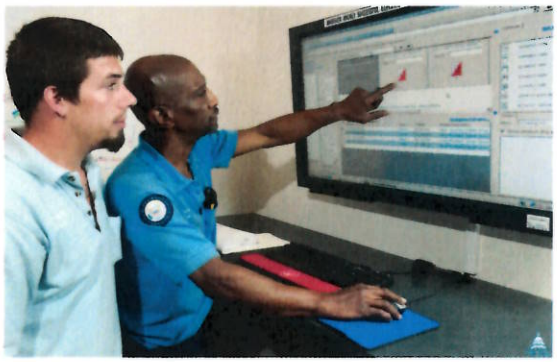
Our request is a 13.3 percent increase over FY 2016 enacted funding levels and, we believe, the minimum amount needed to begin to address decades of reduced investment and an enormous **backlog estimated at $1.49 billion at the close of FY 2015**.

The Building Research Board at the National Research Council recommends a minimum of two to four percent of the current value of a building be reinvested on an annual basis to reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance. Unfortunately, less than one half of one percent of the value of the buildings within the AOC's purview is currently reinvested in our infrastructure.

While these statistics are unacceptable, we continue to make strides by prioritizing our most urgent needs.

Stewardship Through Prioritization

The AOC is keenly aware of how far every taxpayer dollar must go to meet our stewardship responsibilities. As our needs grow, we recognize the importance of leveraging staff expertise, collaborating across the agency and engaging in partnerships that have proven to help stretch limited budgetary resources. There is a balance in addressing repairs and upgrades while also attending to necessary security requirements, energy-saving projects, code-compliance issues, historic preservation measures and the needs of AOC clients.



AOC EMPLOYEES MONITOR ENERGY USAGE.

Operationally, over the past 10 years the AOC has successfully implemented a plan to exceed the energy reduction target established by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, achieving a 30.9 percent reduction from the 2003 baseline. The installation of **over $90 million in energy conservation measures** in our buildings using energy savings performance contracts significantly aided in this effort. These contracts are also great examples of public-private partnerships.

Additionally, in 2013 we began work to implement a shared-service model with the Department of Agriculture's *EmpowHR* Human Resources Information System. By consolidating our efforts and resources, this strategic partnership allows us to curb future operational cost increases.

WORKER PREPARING PART OF ALEXANDER CALDER'S "MOUNTAINS AND CLOUDS" SCULPTURE FOR X-RAY ANALYSIS.

On the construction side, a redesign of the Bartholdi Park project at the U.S. Botanic Garden resulted in a cost reduction of approximately $4 million. And in the Hart Senate Office Building, we were able to leverage roof and skylight replacement project efficiencies toward the solar power system installation and the safety analysis of the Calder clouds.

The AOC's investment approach is also focused on the most immediate capital needs and operational requirements. The projects AOC recommends for funding are prioritized through a rigorous analysis, which includes consultation with industry experts and the utilization of best practices. Through this process, in FY 2015 we were able to bring down the capital program backlog by $61.1 million and prevent our current and future needs from growing at a much larger rate.

The project development process is adjusted annually within the framework of our long-range master plan. Projects are classified according to the type of work the project addresses. Deferred Maintenance (DM) and Capital Renewal (CR) projects are derived from the Facility Condition Assessment surveys. The Capitol Complex Master Plan is the principal source for identifying new Capital Construction needs as well as major Capital Improvement needs. Urgency, classification and importance result in a Composite Rating used to recommend projects for funding.

Our FY 2017 request builds on our successes, **seeking $165.5 million for capital projects.** Of this, $100.6 million (or 61 percent) is specifically for DM – projects where maintenance, repair or replacement is past due, in some cases significantly. In addition, $23.4 million (or 14 percent) is for CR projects that will be added to the growing DM list if not funded in FY 2017. The remaining $41.5 million (or 25 percent) is to upgrade critical safety infrastructure that will improve emergency response capabilities. While significant, our request does not address all of our needs and recommends that $118 million in capital projects be deferred to a future year.

CAPITOL POWER PLANT'S AGING CHILLERS.

We are requesting funds for several **critical safety projects at the Capitol Power Plant (CPP).** To ensure safe and efficient air conditioning and distribution, and reduce the risk of system failure, we need to replace the obsolete 5,000-ton constant speed chiller and cooling towers along with the chillers at the Alternate Computer Facility. These projects will benefit all of the buildings on the Capitol campus along with the U.S. Government Publishing Office, the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, the Postal Square Building, Union Station, the Folger Shakespeare Library and all Legislative Branch information technology systems.

In addition, the CPP's historic clay tile roof is experiencing structural deficiencies. During storms and high winds, the loose elements of the roof are a safety concern, posing a significant risk of water damaging the offices and the more than $700 million worth of equipment that is housed at the CPP.

Water infiltration continues to be a major concern. Water has marred the sandstone and marble encompassing the facades of most of our buildings. As a result, the masonry is cracking and spalling and is causing residual damage within the facilities – rusting of steel structures, mold, mildew and energy loss – threatening the health and safety of our building occupants. We have begun the stone preservation efforts on the Senate Extension of the Capitol as well as the Olmsted Terrace, Russell Senate Office Building, U.S. Botanic Garden and the U.S. Supreme Court. Intensive studies on the remaining buildings are nearing completion, which will allow us to identify future needs.

DAMAGE TO EXTERIOR OF THE HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING.

In the near term, we must address the growing safety risks to personnel and property due to the deterioration of the parking garages on the Capitol campus. The Senate Underground Garage, fountains, reflecting pool and associated systems have exceeded their life expectancy and are in need of renovation and restoration.

The domestic water, storm, sanitary and vent piping in the U.S. Capitol Building has deteriorated to the point where frequent repairs are required due to leaks, corrosion and pipe aging. Continued deterioration and leaks may affect operations of building systems and facilities leading to a whole or partial shutdown of the building.

At the U.S. Botanic Garden, continued deterioration of the greenhouse superstructure does not support the current and expected mission requirements of the USBG's world renowned and rare plant collections. Without the addition of a quarantine facility, the USBG runs the risk of introducing a pest or disease, which could be catastrophic to the broader collection.

Several projects in the Library of Congress buildings are necessary to address urgent life-safety needs, including the second phase of the Library of Congress' Thomas Jefferson Building North Exit Stair B, which will provide increased capacity to quickly evacuate the building in an emergency. If the deficient egress capacity is not corrected, the building occupants will not have the number of available exits required by code for the building. In addition, we are seeking to replace an emergency generator in the Thomas Jefferson Building; modernization of elevators in the John Adams and James Madison Memorial Buildings and repairs to ensure the John Adams Building garage is fully operational and provides ADA compliant access.

AOC Safety Employees provided DC firefighters with familiarization tours of the Library of Congress Buildings.

Failure to address these critical projects in the short term will exacerbate the aging process, facilitate new deterioration and system failures and increase the cost of repairs. Our FY 2017 budget request steers us away from this unadvised and dangerous approach and builds on our growing list of successes.

Conclusion

This fall, we will begin work in support of the 2017 Presidential Inauguration. The Inauguration is a time for us to showcase American democracy, and we are proud that the restoration of the Dome and Rotunda will be complete.

As a passionate advocate for the Capitol campus, I believe that with Congress' support, we can build on our successes and remain a strong and healthy symbol for America's growth and prosperity.

The U.S. Capitol complex houses numerous symbols of an elected government created to *serve* the American people; where representatives from all corners of this great nation gather to *preserve* the ideals and tenets of our constitution and where we *inspire* citizens to take up the mantle of democracy and freedom.

While we exercise our faithful stewardship and fiscal responsibility, we appreciate the support of Congress to provide us with the resources needed to support these lofty goals.