

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN T. AYERS, AIA
ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL**

**Regarding Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations
For the Office of the Architect of the Capitol**

**Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate**

April 30, 2008

Madam Chairman, Senator Alexander, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Office of the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC's) Fiscal Year 2009 budget request. It was nearly 15 months ago that I began serving as Acting Architect of the Capitol, and a little more than a year ago that I first testified before this Subcommittee about the AOC, our budget, our operations, and our accomplishments.

We have seen much change and growth in our Agency, and we have experienced many accomplishments and achievements. Specifically, we have seen our scope of responsibility grow from 15 million square feet of buildings to 16.5 million square feet of facilities, and from 370 acres of land to more than 450 acres. With that additional responsibility comes added cost for maintenance, staff, utilities, and physical security.

At the same time, the historic buildings and other physical infrastructure in our care continue to age. They require extensive maintenance in order to preserve them, as well as ensure that they continue to serve as functioning, professional working environments for years to come. Our buildings range in age from 27 years old for the Library's Madison Building, to more than 200 years old for parts of the Capitol Building. This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Cannon House Office Building, and next year will be the 100th anniversary of the Russell Senate Office Building.

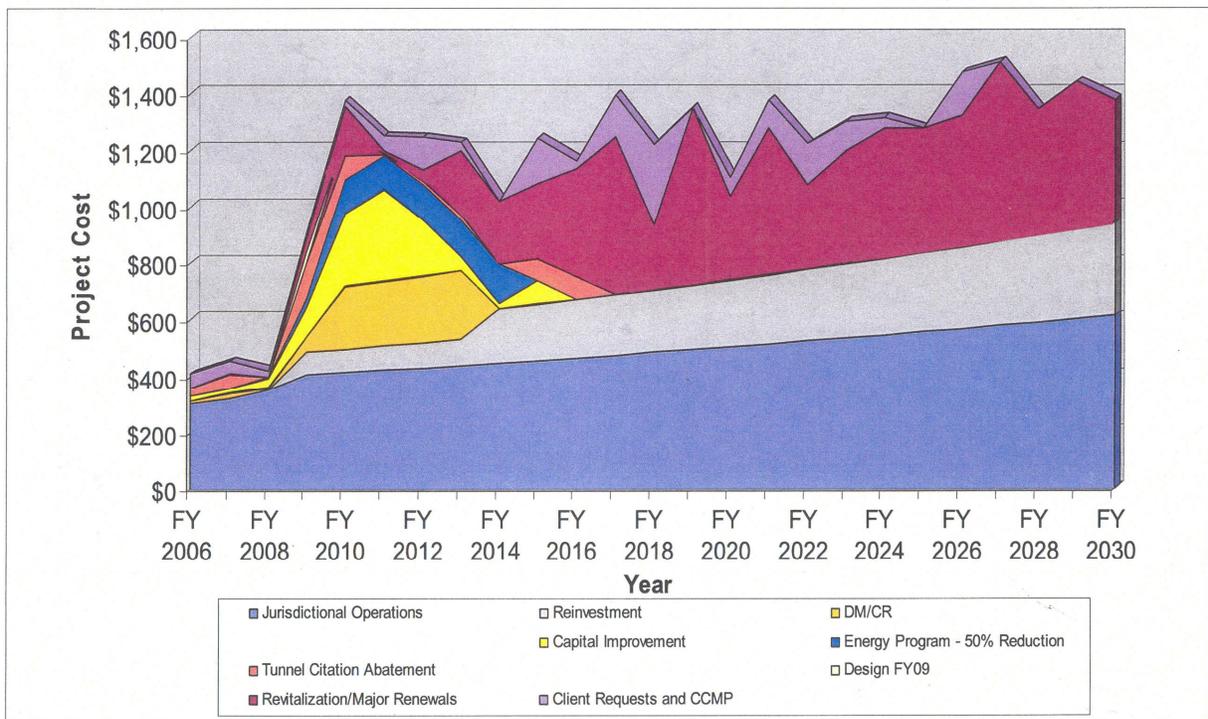
As fire and life-safety requirements and standards have become more stringent since the buildings were constructed, we face significant requirements to abate Office of Compliance citations, and improve fire safety conditions throughout the complex. We are committed to ensuring that

deficiencies are corrected and significant resources are devoted to protecting the people who work and visit here. Life-safety projects, such as the utility tunnel repair program, are very high priorities.

Based on Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs) that have been conducted throughout the Capitol complex since 2004, we have been prioritizing projects based on a set of objective criteria. The FCAs indicate a backlog of more than \$600 million in Deferred Maintenance and \$800 million in Capital Renewal projects, with \$900 million of the total \$1.4 billion being urgent or high priority. As the AOC continues to be unable to fund Deferred Maintenance, Capital Renewal, and new projects and initiatives, the ðbow waveö of unfunded requirements continues to grow, as demonstrated in the following table.

Long Term Demand

(\$ in Millions with inflation)



We have developed this budget through a deliberate planning process, and it reflects only the highest priority initiatives and funding for our core activities. We made some difficult choices in our efforts to be good stewards of the Capitol complex. We have not requested funding for a long list of projects, additional staffing, and several operational initiatives and resources.

While we recognize this is a significant request at a time when fiscal restraint is necessary, we believe that without this important investment Capitol complex facilities will continue to deteriorate. It is fiscally responsible to request the funding needed now instead of waiting until facilities are in crisis and beyond repair, thereby costing millions more to restore, renovate, and renew.

If not addressed, facility requirements will only grow more serious and expensive over time. Thus, we are requesting \$642.7 million for Fiscal Year 2009. This is more than \$228 million greater than what was appropriated to our Agency in FY 2008, or a 55 percent increase.

A large portion of that increase, however, is for our Utility Tunnel Improvement Program. In order to meet the five-year schedule as per the agreement with the Office of Compliance signed last spring, we have requested \$126.6 million for the Utility Tunnel Improvement Program in FY 2009. Without the Tunnel Improvement Program request, our budget request would be 24.5 percent over what was appropriated in FY 2008.

Madam Chairman, we look forward to working with this Subcommittee, the House Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, and our Oversight Committees to address the backlog of maintenance and repair projects, as well as find ways to improve and modernize Capitol complex facilities, so that a crisis situation is averted.

Annual Operating Budget Request

Our FY 2009 annual operating budget request for \$384.4 million provides funding for continuing the routine activities of operating and maintaining the infrastructure that supports the Congress, other Legislative Branch Agencies, and the public, as well as AOC internal infrastructure needs in information management systems and operations. The increase of \$48.1 million is driven primarily by the upfront investment requirement to meet legislated energy usage decreases; as well as fund the initial full-year operations of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC).

To date, the appropriation for the CVC has provided funding for the construction of the CVC and minimal operational start-up costs and facility maintenance. Beginning in FY 2009, this appropriation will need to fund full-time, annual CVC operations and administration, as well as potential construction claims. In addition to salaries, equipment, and supplies, our FY 2009 request will provide funding for the printing of informational brochures, educational public programs, exhibits, training, and other programs associated with the opening of the new facility.

We are also looking to increase our investment in information technology (IT) in FY 2009 to ensure a sustainable life-cycle replacement and upgrade program. Over the past four years, the AOC has not been able to replace or upgrade aging network, storage, server, and desktop systems at a rate required to sustain a secure and reliable IT infrastructure.

Many of these systems were last upgraded or replaced in 2002 following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and are now nearing or past their expected life span. They have not been replaced due to budget shortfalls and restrictions under the continuing resolutions of the last few years. Those same shortfalls have also impacted our ability to perform the overdue certification and accreditation of our IT systems and to implement industry and government standard IT security capabilities, such as secure remote access and encryption. In FY 2009, we will also complete the modernization of our computing infrastructure to take advantage of new *ögreenö* virtualization technologies and move to a Microsoft Exchange e-mail system, which is the de facto standard throughout the government.

In addition, new energy reduction and management initiatives, the utility tunnel upgrade projects, and the digitization of our curatorial photo archives are significantly increasing costs related to the management and storage of our electronic data. We are also working to migrate to a Web-based time and attendance system that will integrate with our facilities management system to enable more effective cost accounting for projects and integrate with the time clocks required under our union agreement.

Finally, we are also continuing to develop and expand the capabilities of our automated human resources and financial management systems to keep pace with evolving technological and process changes and improve efficiency and usability of those systems.

Capital Project Budget Request

The second component of our FY 2009 budget request is \$258.2 million for capital projects. As I discussed earlier, chief among our responsibilities is maintaining, preserving, and upgrading the national treasures entrusted to our care by Congress. This includes the facilities, grounds, art work, and other assets. Determining which work is done first and where our limited resources are best used involves a deliberate approach and multi-year project planning.

A vital tool that we rely on during this process is our Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs). The AOC has been conducting FCAs throughout the Capitol complex since 2004, to help us catalog and prioritize projects based on a set of objective criteria that allow us to evaluate the merits of each project. FCAs also provide us with a method for measuring the current condition of all facilities in a uniform way to assess how much work is necessary to maintain or upgrade their conditions to acceptable levels to support organizational missions, prevent further deterioration, and help to determine when this work should occur.

Once an FCA is completed on each facility, the information is rolled into a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is used to evaluate projects based on a set of pre-established criteria. These criteria include whether the work addresses fire and life-safety issues; code compliance; preservation of historic or legacy elements; economics and life cycle cost considerations, physical security and other considerations, such as environmental and energy efficiency. The projects are further evaluated based on the conditions of the facilities and their components, and the urgency in correcting the deficiencies.

We are also developing the Capitol Complex Master Plan (CCMP) which requires executing necessary deferred maintenance and renewal work to keep existing facilities functioning while planning for major renewal projects. The CCMP and individual Jurisdiction Plans seek to address these growing problems through a flexible investment strategy incorporating reinvestment and new construction. Each Jurisdiction Plan is being evaluated to ensure sequencing of short- and long-term priority work is properly expedited and aligned to ensure successful execution and avoid duplication of efforts. Ultimately, the CCMP will establish a framework that will help the Congress to prioritize the maintenance, renovation, and construction of facilities over the next five, 10, and 20 years while allowing for prudent budgeting of the costs for necessary upkeep and construction.

Using the CIP process, we are able to comparatively vet the projects to ensure that the most urgent get addressed most quickly. Setting these priorities and setting limits resulted in some projects not rising to the top of the list based on the objective criteria used as part of the CIP process. It is not that these projects are not important. They are all needed and are mission critical, but the fiscally responsible thing to do is address the most urgent needs first. This multi-step methodology was used to produce the project priority list included in our FY 2009 budget request submitted for the Subcommittee's consideration.

As in previous budgets, our primary focus is on ensuring that fire and life-safety deficiencies are corrected and that significant resources are devoted to protecting the people who work and visit the Capitol complex. An example of a major life-safety project is the Utility Tunnel Improvement Program.

In May 2007, the AOC and OOC signed a comprehensive settlement of a complaint and three citations involving safety in the utility tunnels. The AOC will permanently abate safety and health hazards within five years unless extended by mutual agreement of the parties or necessitated by funding shortfalls. Receipt of the \$126.6 million requested in FY 2009 assures that the AOC remains on schedule to meeting its obligations under the settlement agreement with the OOC.

Other key capital projects included in the AOC's FY 2009 budget request are:

- U.S. Capitol Grand Stairs Smoke Control System
- Smoke Control System of Adams Building
- Refurbishment of FOB-8
- Various Energy Conservation Studies

In addition to these new capital projects, we have nearly completed construction of the Capitol Visitor Center project and are preparing to open the facility later this year.

Capitol Visitor Center Budget Request and Project Update

Our FY 2009 budget request for the CVC includes \$31 million to finish the construction phase of the project. Specifically this money will be used to fund delay costs associated with increased scope, fire alarm changes, and the final acceptance testing. Last year, I testified before this Subcommittee that

CVC construction was 91 percent complete. Today, we are 99 percent complete with construction and are well underway with the final acceptance testing of the complex fire and life-safety systems in the facility.

In the past year, we made much progress on the project. We worked with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and reached agreement on an estimated cost-to-complete figure of \$621 million and an opening date of November 2008. We also established and met the November 15, 2007, substantial completion date, effectively stemming project delays and associated delay costs, which assured that the complex fire and life-safety pre-testing began on schedule on November 16.

With regard to our progress in completing construction, we are working to complete punchlist items such as millwork, wall stone, floor stone, ceiling panels, plaster work, carpeting, doors, and other finishes. Professional crews have been thoroughly cleaning all of the CVC's major public spaces.

A further indication that we are successfully transitioning from a construction project to a visitor services operation is that the 11-foot model of the Capitol Dome was installed in March, and it is an impressive sight to see at the center of Exhibition Hall. Historic drawings and sophisticated technology were used to create this unique 3-D model, and AOC staff ensured that every detail of the model is accurate. It is an important part of the CVC experience because it will allow children to have a very hands-on experience at their Nation's Capitol.

Video screens in the Senate and House Virtual Theaters have been installed and are being tested. Workers are now installing the 10-foot wooden doors on the east side of the Rotunda. The Capitol Superintendent's Office has initiated relocation coordination meetings with future occupants, and has begun to identify its equipment and inventory needs to fully support maintenance operations.

Outside, the East Front is taking on a much greener appearance with the warmer weather and the ongoing landscape restoration work being done. All of the construction trailers have been removed and crews have been preparing the grounds for sod placement and plantings.

The sidewalk along First Street, N.E., across from the Supreme Court Building, has been restored. The CVC truck entrance which had been located there since 2002 has been completely dismantled and the area has been restored.

We are pleased with the overall progress, and we believe that we're on schedule to receive the temporary Certificate of Occupancy by July 31, 2008, as planned, and that the CVC will be available to open in November 2008.

Madam Chairman, as you know, the CVC has been designed to greatly enhance the visitor experience by providing greater educational opportunities and much-needed amenities to the millions of people who visit their Capitol Building each year. It is designed to match the Capitol in quality and endurance, and generations of Americans will greatly benefit from all it has to offer.

In that regard, I am pleased to note that the CVC was recently recognized by the Washington Building Congress. Specifically, the project was singled out for 11 Craftsmanship Awards for the high-quality, professional workmanship demonstrated throughout the facility by individuals who are creative, precise, and possess the special skills associated with quality craftsmanship.

The features that were recognized with Craftsmanship Awards include the six skylights which allow natural light into the CVC; the custom light fixtures located throughout the CVC and Expansion Spaces that complement the existing fixtures in the Capitol Building; the installation of major hard scape features such as stairs and seat walls, as well as the re-installation of historic elements such as fountains and lanterns on the East Front; and the installation of monumental interior wall stone and marble, and ornamental staircases, doors, and other hardware. Technical skills of the teams responsible for electrical and fire alarm systems installation, and plaster work were also honored.

In addition to the 11 Craftsmanship Awards, several of the winners were extended additional honors with the receipt of the "Star Award" for projects deserving of special recognition for demonstrating the highest level of quality. The CVC project was recognized for visual excellence and technical excellence, and the project also received the Hall of Fame award for the masonry work done throughout the facility. For the Washington Building Congress to recognize the CVC for its superb

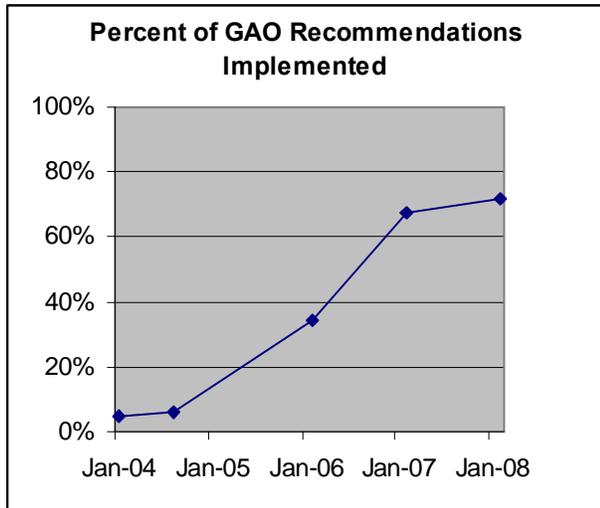
craftsmanship and quality is a true honor. The fine team that has worked on this project can take great pride in their role in helping to complete the largest single expansion of the Capitol Building.

On the operations front, we hired a Chief Executive Officer for Visitor Services in September 2007 to join the AOC/CVC team, Ms. Terrie Rouse. She, in turn, has begun hiring staff to prepare for the CVC's opening to the public. In addition, she has been developing a communications plan which focuses on executing an effective and valuable public education campaign about the CVC and all it has to offer. We have also been working on a transportation plan, as well as on the exhibits and other informational materials in anticipation of the opening later this year.

A Year of AOC Accomplishments

Madam Chairman, as I discussed earlier, the past year has been one of significant achievement for the AOC in addition to seeing substantial completion of the CVC. I would like to sum up my testimony by listing a few of our many accomplishments.

- Added the Library of Congress's new 415,000 square-foot National Audio Visual Conservation Center located on the Packard Campus in Culpeper, Virginia, to our facilities inventory.
- Signed into effect a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 626, representing approximately 500 laborers, custodians, gardeners, and other workers in the House and Senate Office Buildings, U.S. Capitol, and the U.S. Botanic Garden.
- Completed office moves for the 110th Congress, including 21 Senate Offices and 840 Senate staffer moves with a 96 percent satisfaction rating, and 181 House Offices and 20 House Committees with a customer satisfaction level of 96 percent.
- Completed the purchase of the Senate Mail Facility.
- Completed the start-up, personnel training, and initial operation of the Capitol Power Plant's West Refrigeration Plant Expansion.
- Closed 68 of 98 items from the 39 Office of Compliance citations, as of April 2008, and we have submitted a request to close six additional items.



In addition, after working with the Government Accountability Office to regroup and consolidate some recommendations, we closed 48 out of 65, or 74 percent, of the GAO's general management recommendations that we are tracking. Many of the remaining actions are larger, long-term efforts, and we continue to focus on moving them forward.

In October 2006, we implemented our new FY 2007 ó FY 2011 Strategic and Performance Plan which emphasizes our mission areas and enabling services

and focuses on results. In order to comply with the spirit and intent of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the AOC submits to Congress a Strategic Plan for program activities in accordance with the guidelines under Section 306 (Strategic plans) of the GPRA. The AOC consults with its employees and the Congress, and solicits and considers the views and suggestions of those entities potentially affected by or interested in such a plan.

AOC employees also prepared an annual performance plan in accordance with the GPRA. The annual performance plan establishes objective, quantifiable, and measurable performance goals for each activity. In addition, we submit an annual report on performance for the previous fiscal year in the performance section of the AOC Performance and Accountability Report, in accordance with the GPRA. Using these important tools, we have continued to improve our cost accounting procedures and internal controls. The results have been significant. We have just received our fifth consecutive clean audit opinion on our financial statements.

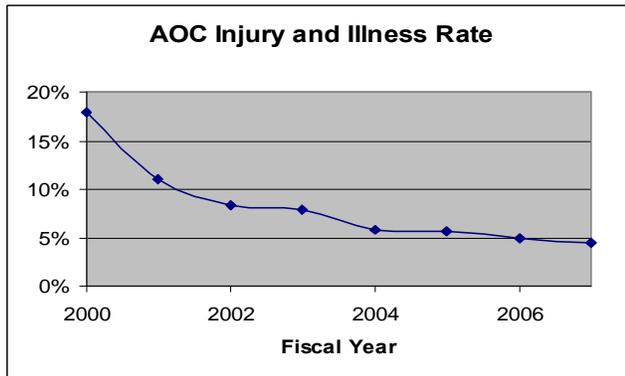
Over the past year we have also been working to create a healthy and productive work environment where environmental awareness and conservation are the normal ways of doing business in the Capitol complex. There are a number of initiatives that the AOC has been engaged in for several years, and we continue to see results in our efforts to improve energy efficiency.

Some of our energy-saving initiatives include:

- Installing an E-85 fueling station.
- Replacing conventional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) across the Capitol complex.
- Incorporating standards from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System into our design standards to start new construction from a green baseline. The Capitol Visitor Center is a prime example of this practice.
- Replacing old, inefficient windows with airtight, insulated ones in buildings across the Capitol complex, including the Supreme Court and the Ford House Office Building.
- Purchasing and leasing only Energy Star appliances and equipment.
- Using Energy Savings Performance Contracting to increase building energy efficiencies and upgrade infrastructure.
- Installing modern heating/cooling systems and adjusting and controlling HVAC schedules.
- Upgrading elevators and escalators with energy-efficient solid state equipment, including high-efficiency motors.
- Installing restroom fixture motion sensors and additional low-flow devices for water conservation.
- Implementing a pilot program to upgrade controls on heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) terminal units in Senate offices and Committee rooms to reduce energy usage while increasing comfort levels.
- Implemented a pilot program to install dimmable lighting ballast systems with daylight and occupancy sensors in overhead lighting to maintain consistent lighting levels in Senate offices. A similar pilot is ongoing in the Capitol Building.
- Installing occupancy sensor light switches for offices, conference rooms, and Committee rooms upon request.

Internally, we continue to foster a results-oriented workplace and encourage communication and teamwork throughout the Agency. This involves holding regular staff or shop meetings, conducting biannual town hall meetings with all AOC employees, and providing a variety of training opportunities.

I am pleased to report that a direct result of our efforts is a decrease in our Injury and Illness Rate for the eighth year in a row. We dropped to 4.41 cases per 100 employees in FY 2007, down from 4.88 in FY 2006, and significantly lower from a high of 17.9 in FY 2000.



In addition, we are institutionalizing best practices throughout the organization. We have joined the Construction Users Roundtable (CURT), Construction Industry Institute (CII), Construction Managers Association of America (CMAA), and

Building Owners and Management Association (BOMA), and several other professional associations, to learn about industry best practices and find ways to incorporate and engage those practices into our Agency. We have developed extensive core competencies in our procurement, financial management, and project management organizations and have seen our efforts pay off over the past year.

Most importantly, we have improved our delivery of services to our clients as demonstrated by our annual Building Services Customer Satisfaction Surveys. In FY 2007, we received high marks from our clients ó more than 95 percent satisfaction -- on areas such as maintenance and cleaning standards, services provided by AOC shops, and responsiveness.

Conclusion

Madam Chairman, we greatly appreciate this Subcommittee’s support and the investment Congress has made in our facilities and infrastructure over the past several years. However, as these buildings age, they will require significant repairs, renovations, and upgrades to continue to be safe and healthy working environments for Senators and their staffs. This will require a significant investment.

My goal is to begin reducing the backlog of Deferred Maintenance and Capital Renewal work that has been identified over the past several years through Facility Condition Assessments, and address the òbow waveö of unfunded requirements that has continued to grow for our Agency.

We are committed to working with Congress to address the backlog of maintenance and repair projects, as well as improve and modernize Capitol complex facilities, so that a crisis situation is averted. The longer we wait to address these issues, the greater the cost will be to fix the problems over time.

The AOC is committed to being good stewards of the Capitol complex, and in that regard, over the past year; we have accomplished much and experienced numerous successes. These achievements can be directly attributed to the dedicated, professional individuals that make up the AOC team; including a strong senior leadership team. In my role as Acting Architect, I am honored and privileged to work along side them. Because of their efforts and commitment to excellence, we continue to provide exceptional service to Congress and the visiting public.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.