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**U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

**BEFORE THE**

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**November 18, 2009**



Good morning Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and members of this Committee. My name is Robert A. Peck and I am the Commissioner of the General Services Administration's (GSA's) Public Buildings Service (PBS). Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss GSA's role and expectations in the security of our facilities.

We have no more important responsibility than safeguarding our roughly one million Federal tenants, housed in GSA facilities, and their visitors in a manner that reflects the values of American democracy and the responsibility of our government to be open to the citizens it serves. Our buildings must be secure and at the same time must also be inviting and a good neighbor in their communities. This is a tall order.

GSA's PBS is one of the largest and most diversified public real estate organizations in the world. Our real estate inventory consists of over 8,600 owned and leased assets with nearly 354 million square feet of space across all 50 states, 6 territories, and the District of Columbia. Our portfolio is composed primarily of office buildings, courthouses, land ports of entry, and warehouses. GSA's goal is to manage these assets efficiently, while delivering and maintaining superior workplaces at best value to our client agencies and the American taxpayer. Achieving this goal requires a complete understanding of the threats facing our facilities, the accurate and timely identification of vulnerabilities, and a clear understanding of the tools available to us to overcome the vulnerabilities and counter the threats.

We rely on the Federal Protective Service (FPS) to conduct risk assessments of our facilities. These assessments and additional input from FPS help inform how we design, acquire, and run our buildings.

Like all executive branch agencies, GSA and FPS are subject to the security standards established by the Interagency Security Committee (ISC). The ISC's membership includes representatives from more than 40 Executive departments and agencies, in addition to the U.S. Courts.

GSA is the only federal agency whose mission is real property management that is represented in the ISC. Through our participation, we ensure that the real property perspective is included in all standards. Specifically, PBS engages representatives from all disciplines in developing our input: leasing specialists, architects, engineers, portfolio management professionals, customer service representatives, child care center specialists, and building management officials.

We are encouraged that the ISC is working to develop new standards that are moving in a direction that allows greater flexibility about risk-based allocation. At GSA, we firmly believe in the need for risk-based allocation of resources throughout our portfolio. Even in the area of physical security, this is particularly important. Funding and efforts must first be focused on the highest risk facilities, and against the highest risk threats.

GSA remains committed to providing our customers with a comprehensive work environment to allow them to complete their mission. We work continuously with FPS to assess, support, and safeguard our federal facilities. I met recently with FPS leadership in Kansas City to advance the risk-based allocation approach to security.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate that PBS is committed to providing our customers with the most effective working environments we can. Current standards dictate security measures that applied across a broad range of facilities. Integrating a new risk-based approach provides us with the most flexibility to address site specific conditions and balance necessary security measures with openness of our public buildings.

I look forward to working with the Committee as we continue to make great strides in this area. Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.