

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2023

Mr. Robert C. Erickson, Jr.
Acting Inspector General
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F St NW
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Acting Inspector General Erickson,

We write to request an immediate investigation into the serious concerns raised by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Christopher Wray, regarding the site selection process for a new FBI headquarters.¹ There is overwhelming evidence suggesting that the General Services Administration (GSA) administered a site selection process fouled by political considerations and alleged impropriety – one that was repeatedly curated to arrive at a predetermined outcome.

Throughout the site selection deliberations, GSA suppressed, dismissed, and overrode the judgement and recommendations of career officials from GSA and the FBI. This has led the Director of the FBI to take the extraordinary step of calling into question the “fairness and transparency in the process and GSA’s failure to adhere to its own site selection plan.”²

In July 2023, the agency executed a series of changes to significantly alter long-established site selection criteria and scoring rules. The changes made to the criteria were almost exclusively responsive to perceived concerns and direct requests from representatives of the Greenbelt site, meant to tilt the selection process in favor of Greenbelt. GSA made these changes over the objections of the FBI, which wrote to GSA in a June 26, 2023 memo that the original scoring criteria “best balanced the many wide-ranging elements considered for optimal site selection.”³

That same month, the agency finalized a plan to unilaterally remove a career official from the position of Site Selection Authority, the person tasked with confirming the recommendation of the site selection panel and certifying a final site selection.⁴ The agency, instead, installed a political appointee as the Site Selection Authority. Director Wray, once again, raised serious objections to the change. Additionally, the FBI identified potential conflicts of interest that the appointee had related to the Greenbelt site, and raised concerns about potential impartiality. These concerns were never fully addressed by GSA.

¹ GSA’s Office of Inspector General has previously reviewed earlier stages of this site selection process – “Review of GSA’s Revised Plan for the Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters Consolidation Project,” dated August 27, 2018.

² Wray, Christopher A. (November 9, 2023) Message from the Director to all FBI Employees on GSA Site Selection Announcement.

³ Memorandum (September 22, 2023). From Brian C. Turner, Associate Deputy Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Re: FBI New Suburban Headquarters Site Selection Concerns.

⁴ *Id.*

In August 2023, the site selection panel, comprised of two career GSA officials and one career FBI official, reached a unanimous decision to select Springfield, Virginia as the home for the new FBI headquarters. The new Site Selection Authority unilaterally overturned the decision of the panel, including by making changes to the scoring – contrary to GSA’s own site selection plan – which benefited consideration of the Greenbelt site, and hurt the Springfield site. According to the FBI, “the justification offered for those changes have been both varied and insufficient.”⁵

In summary, GSA changed the original site selection criteria – which had been developed by GSA experts, in accordance with the agency’s own best practices for site selection – in a way that favored the Greenbelt site, and did so over the objections of the FBI Director. Then GSA changed the person tasked with confirming the final site selection from a career official to a political appointee. As identified by the FBI, there existed a potential conflict of interest with that political appointee, tied to the Greenbelt site. The political appointee then overturned the decision of a panel of career officials who unanimously selected Springfield, in part by changing how certain criteria were calculated and how certain factors were considered, contrary to what had been previously outlined to the public and to Congress by GSA. Almost immediately after directing the final site selection to Greenbelt, the political appointee promptly left the federal government, implicating Congress’s ability to engage with this individual in an oversight capacity. In defending the indefensible, GSA has decided to proceed with the selection of Greenbelt over the objections of its client agency, the FBI.

These facts, when taken together, paint an ugly picture of a fatally flawed procurement that demands further investigation. We request that your office initiate an immediate investigation into the site selection process for the FBI headquarters.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator

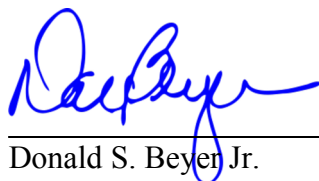
⁵ Wray, Christopher A. (October 12, 2023) Letter to the Honorable Robin Carnahan, Administrator, General Services Administration.



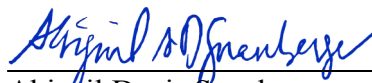
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



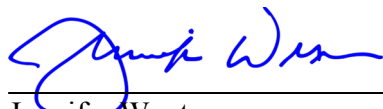
Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



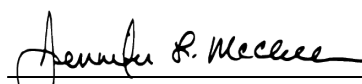
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



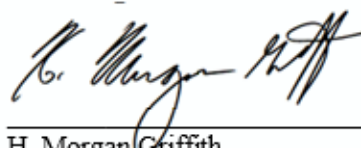
Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Jen A. Kiggans
Member of Congress



H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress