



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

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U.S. Senate Appropriations Legislative Branch Subcommittee Opening Statement of Chairman Mary Landrieu

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate Appropriations Legislative Branch Subcommittee on Friday held a hearing to examine the proposed Fiscal 2008 budget for the Architect of the U.S. Capitol. The opening statement from Senator Mary Landrieu, Chairman of the Subcommittee, is below.

We meet today to take testimony on the fiscal year 2008 budget request for the Architect of the Capitol. I am honored to chair my first Legislative Branch Subcommittee hearing. I look forward to working closely with Senator Allard, my ranking member, and with the agencies and staffs that support the Legislative Branch

The legislative branch budget request totals roughly \$4.3 billion. This is an increase of \$540 million or 15% over the current year.

While most executive branch agencies will be held to basically flat budgets again this year, a number of the agencies before this subcommittee have proposed very substantial increases and we will need to review these requests very carefully. Working with very limited resources, it will be very important to have your top priorities in mind when we make what promise to be very difficult budgetary decisions.

I want to welcome today's witness, Stephen Ayers, Acting Architect of the Capitol, who recently replaced Alan Hantman after his retirement early last month. I know this isn't an easy time to take over the position of Acting Architect of the Capitol with the Visitor Center still under construction, and many decisions still pending on this project. I appreciate your commitment to this organization and wish you good luck in this endeavor as the members of the selection Commission search for a candidate to serve as the next Architect of the Capitol.

I want to start by thanking you, Mr. Ayers, and Tom Fontana and Shalley Kim of your staff, for taking the time to show me, my staff, and my family around the Capitol Visitor Center last week. It was my first time down to the CVC and I must say I was impressed. It is very hard to describe the magnitude of this project to someone without actually seeing it. There is just no easy way to picture in your mind a 580,000 square foot subterranean structure such as this one. I have no doubt that once this facility opens, it

will be a tremendous source of pride to all of us and an invaluable resource to the many people who visit the Capitol each day.

The AOC budget request totals \$482 million, an increase of \$82 million or 20 percent over the current year. There are a number of rather large items in your request such as \$20 million for the Capitol Visitor Center, \$25 million for repairs to the utility tunnels, and \$87 million for various repairs to the Senate Office Buildings. When you testified before the House Legislative Branch Subcommittee last month, you announced that the schedule for the CVC had slipped yet again, so I hope you will let the subcommittee know how this might affect, either positively or negatively, your budget submission for fiscal year 2008.

Finally, Mr. Ayers, before you begin your statement, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to your entire staff for their hard work in maintaining the Capitol Complex on a daily basis, and particularly to Marvin Simpson of your staff for the assistance he has provided to me and my staff since I came to Capitol Hill. He is a true professional. Thank you very much.

And now I would like to turn to my ranking member and friend, Senator Allard, for his opening remarks.

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