

**U.S. Senate Rules and Administration Committee  
Oversight Hearing – Smithsonian Institution**

Good morning. I would like to welcome the witnesses who have agreed to testify today:

- Mark Goldstein, Director of the Physical Infrastructure Team at the GAO;
- Cristián Samper, Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian;
- Roger Sant, Chair of the Smithsonian Regents Executive Committee; and
- Robert Kogod, Chair of the Smithsonian Regents Committee on Facilities Revitalization.

The September 2007 GAO report on the condition and security of the Smithsonian clearly documents very serious challenges:

- Failing temperature and humidity controls at the National Air and Space Museum storage facilities have caused corrosion of historic airplanes;
- Leaking roofs endanger collections at the Sackler Galleries and the National Museum of African Art;
- Leaking pools at the National Zoo cause an average loss of 110,000 gallons of water every day at a cost of \$297,000 annually;
- A 31 percent decrease in the security presence at the Smithsonian's two most visited museums have led to incidents of vandalism and theft.

I know that the Regents have been diligently working to develop a comprehensive funding plan to address these problems and I have called this hearing to discuss the GAO report's findings and the Smithsonian's proposed solutions.

As I have said before, as Chairman of this Committee and of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee I will do my level best to provide every dollar I can to the Smithsonian. However, it will be impossible to close the Institution's \$2.5 billion facilities and maintenance backlog with federal funding alone. We all need to be more creative and come up with alternative solutions.

To this end, I'm pleased to announce that the Senate and House Interior Appropriations subcommittees have been working towards an agreement on a new, \$45 million public/private matching program we plan to call the Legacy Fund.

It would work this way: once the Smithsonian raised \$30 million in private funds, the federal government would match those donations with \$15 million additional federal dollars. This fund would be dedicated solely to facilities maintenance and revitalization projects.

At this point, because negotiations continue on the overall appropriations package, I can't say definitely that the Fund will be enacted into law, but it's my fervent hope that this funding will be made available in 2008. I believe it will take partnerships like this one to take care of the rapidly deteriorating facilities that are jeopardizing this beloved institution.

Even if we can secure this additional funding, the Smithsonian still has a long road ahead and I am interested in hearing more about the newly announced capital campaign that represents, as I understand it, the first national fundraising effort of its kind at the Institution.

This is a good first step, and I encourage all of the Regents to continue thinking big, because that is the only way we are going to be able preserve and protect the vast collection of American treasures that are in your care.

In addition to the capital campaign, I encourage you to consider instituting a policy of directing a percentage of every donation to the Institution to the facilities maintenance fund.

I know the Smithsonian believes that donors only want to pay for exhibits and that they aren't interested in fixing leaky roofs or ensuring that the collections are secure, but my experience as Mayor of San Francisco proves otherwise.

I saw citizens contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of the cable car system because they loved it and wanted to see it continue.

I believe that the same would be true of donors to the Smithsonian Institution. What good are donations to exhibits if the buildings that house them are crumbling around them?

The Arts and Industries Building is a perfect example. Right now that beautiful building sits empty on the National Mall, right next door to the Smithsonian Castle. I have to believe that if people understood that this symbol of the Smithsonian Institution was shuttered because its roof is literally falling down, that they would contribute to a campaign to fix it.

The Smithsonian is a huge and wonderful institution with the finest people in America working within it.

We owe it to the Smithsonian to use every available resource at our disposal to clean up this mess. I am committed to doing everything I possibly can in this effort, and I trust that that the Institution's commitment is equally strong.

I look forward to hearing the details of the Facilities Maintenance Committee's comprehensive plan to address the funding shortfall

And I hope it includes pulling out all the stops to get the message out to the Smithsonian's millions and millions of visitors, donors and friends that the crisis is real and we need everyone's help to get out of it.