

Legislation eases administrative burdens, provides financial incentives and increases transparency and oversight of federal property.

WASHINGTON —Today, legislation authored by U.S. Representatives Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) to cut wasteful spending and increase federal property management efficiency was approved by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee as H.R. 665, The Excess Federal Building and Property Disposal Act of 2011.

“The federal government is the largest property owner in the world, but billions of tax dollars are wasted each year maintaining properties we no longer need,” said Rep. Quigley. “This legislation encourages the disposal of unneeded property by creating financial incentives and lifting administrative hurdles, while increasing transparency so that we are no longer flying blind when it comes to the value and condition of our holdings.”

Currently, the federal government has an inventory of over 900,000 buildings and structures and 41 million acres of land. Yet the Government Accountability Office has found many properties are no longer relevant to their agencies’ missions. Nearly 14,000 buildings and structures have been deemed excess and over 76,000 properties are identified as underutilized. In fiscal year 2009, these underutilized buildings cost taxpayers \$1.7 billion to operate annually.

Congressman Quigley’s initiative creates a 5 year pilot program that lifts administrative hurdles to disposal and asks the Government Services Administration to expeditiously dispose of 15 high-value, unneeded properties on a rolling list basis. Additionally, the legislation incentivizes agencies to dispose of unneeded properties by allowing them to retain proceeds from property sales, and use those funds to pay for disposal costs. Any profits from sales not used for disposal costs will be used to pay down the deficit. It also empowers the General Services Administration to help agencies identify and dispose of unneeded properties, and creates an online database for all property owned by the federal government.

“It is imperative that we reform the process and increase transparency because there is a serious disconnect between the information in our records and the reality in the field,” said Rep. Quigley. “My staff visited an Illinois property recorded as being in excellent condition and reportedly worth over \$8 million. What they saw was a facility in shambles, its exterior overtaken

by vegetation and the interior looted by vandals, but which costs \$80,000 a year to maintain.”

The bipartisan legislation passed the committee vote unanimously.

“We are facing an unsustainable budget deficit and one of the best ways to address that deficit is to reduce spending by encouraging efficiency and cutting waste. There could not be a better time to pass this bill,” said Rep. Quigley.

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