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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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STATEMENT OF  
WILLIAM J. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ON  
THE PROPOSED CARTER  
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY



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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to be here today to provide information and comments on selected aspects of the proposed Carter Presidential Library and its relationship to existing Presidential Libraries in terms of estimated costs to the taxpayer. Our comments are directed primarily to those matters discussed in the report on the proposed library that the General Services Administration (GSA) submitted to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on July 26, 1983, pursuant to the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955.

#### BACKGROUND

The Presidential Libraries Act was enacted on August 12, 1955, to provide for acceptance and maintenance of presidential libraries. The act authorizes the Administrator of General Services to accept for deposit the papers and other historical materials of a President, former President, an official, or former official (rank not defined in the act) of government, together with the papers relating to or contemporary with the President or former President. It also allows the Administrator to accept land, buildings, and equipment offered to the government for a Presidential archival depository and to maintain, operate, and protect them.

The Administrator may not take title to property for a presidential archival depository or enter into an agreement for the use as a presidential archival depository of land, buildings, and equipment of certain public or private bodies until

the Administrator has submitted a report to the Congress and observed a 60 day waiting period or received congressional approval of the plan for the library.

The report on the proposed Carter Presidential Library submitted to the Congress by the Administrator contains, among other things, information on the estimated annual cost to the United States for maintaining, operating, and protecting the Library; a description of the land, building, and equipment offered as a gift and a description of the land to be made available for use without cost to the government; and a statement of the terms for transfer of the facility to the United States and for use of the surrounding land.

#### DEVELOPING AND REVIEWING THE PROPOSED LIBRARY

The process for the proposal and approval of a new presidential library is not controlled by formalized written GSA procedures. For the proposed Carter Library, the Office of Presidential Libraries in the National Archives and Records Service provided the Carter Presidential Library, Inc., (the private organization that is financing the Library construction) a statement of general requirements intended to provide architectural planners with basic information on the size, functions, and operations of the Library. Included in this information is guidance on space estimates, environmental conditions, and other requirements concerning the nature of a structure to serve the needs of a presidential library.

The guidance is intended primarily as an outline of general considerations to be kept in mind by the architects rather than

as a detailed statement of requirements. It was prepared by the Office of Presidential Libraries primarily on the basis of its experiences on the Ford Library. When the guidance was in draft form it was circulated to the directors of the existing presidential libraries for any comments they wished to provide. The document was then provided to the architects competing for the privilege of designing the Carter Library. The successful joint venture used this document in developing the design of the Library.

The Director of the Presidential Materials Project is serving as the primary Archives representative for reviewing the plans for the Library in preparation for the start of construction. The Director uses the technical assistance of GSA's Public Buildings Service on an as-needed basis. The Library design and construction will primarily be the responsibility of the Library Corporation. Thus, the Director's main role is to assure that the plans have adequately considered the general requirements for the Library on the basis of past National Archives and Records Service experience as determined by the quantity and nature of the archival materials that will be placed there.

#### COST TO THE TAXPAYERS

The cost to the taxpayers for operating, maintaining, and protecting presidential libraries has long been a matter of concern. It is clear that a rather modest concept of a presidential library prevailed at the time the Presidential Libraries Act was enacted in 1955. Testimony that year by the Archivist of the United States on the need for the legislation emphasized

that the primary purposes of the libraries were to bring together, preserve, and maintain presidential papers for scholarly research. The two libraries existing at the time were relatively limited in size: the Hoover Library was 25,000 square feet and the Roosevelt Library was 39,000 square feet. During the 1955 hearings, Archives officials estimated that at the end of 100 years--if 15 presidential libraries were constructed and given to the government--the annual net maintenance and operating costs would be about \$1.5 million for all 15 libraries. Today there are seven libraries in existence and these libraries average about 80,000 square feet each and cost an average of more than \$1.5 million each to operate, maintain, and protect.

While we believe the size, uses, and thus the costs of most presidential libraries exceed what was anticipated at the time the Presidential Libraries Act was passed, the proposed Carter Library will be, according to data provided by GSA, more modest in both size and cost to the taxpayers than the last four presidential libraries. According to GSA, the proposed combined library and museum of the Carter Library will total 70,000 gross square feet and will cost an estimated \$1.5 million (in 1983 dollars) annually to operate, maintain, and protect.

The estimated operating costs assume that the Library will be fully staffed with 21 positions. The other presidential libraries are not fully staffed, so this estimate overstates expected costs to the extent that Library and Museum positions are not filled. Estimated building maintenance, utilities, and

cleaning costs were derived from the average of these costs at the seven other presidential libraries. This average was judgmentally adjusted for climate and other anticipated differences in the Atlanta area and expressed as \$9 per square foot for the 70,000 total gross square footage in the Library/Museum to arrive at an estimated annual maintenance, cleaning, and utilities cost of \$630,000.

At the time the cost estimate for maintenance, cleaning, and utilities was developed, key design decisions had not yet been made. Only conceptual design drawings were available. These drawings did not specify the heating/cooling systems to be installed in the building or the specific building materials to be used. Therefore, parametric estimating methods based on square feet of space were used to develop the cost estimate included in the proposal submitted by GSA. A more reliable estimate will be available when detailed design has been completed. The estimate of the annual cost for protection of the Library/Museum is based on anticipated contract costs for these protection services and maintenance costs for the security system.

The GSA report anticipates one-time costs for the Library to be \$341,300. Most of these costs are related to an electronic security system and specialized museum storage equipment, such as garment and fabric storage containers and storage containers for maps, charts, or similar large documents that should be stored flat. The exact requirements for the storage equipment are not fully known because most of the museum items are

still crated and have not yet been fully evaluated. This will be done by a museum curator who has not yet been appointed.

#### SITE FOR THE LIBRARY

The Carter Library is to be constructed on land presently held by the Georgia Department of Transportation. This land was originally acquired as a right-of-way for the construction of Interstate 485, but that project has been terminated. According to Federal Highway Administration officials, the land was acquired in part with the use of federal highway trust fund monies. Approval for reuse of much of the land acquired for Route 485 has been granted to the Georgia Department of Transportation by the Federal Highway Administration, and some of the land has already been converted to other approved uses. Reuse for certain purposes, such as public recreation or conservation, could remove the requirement for repayment of federal highway funds.

The Georgia Department of Transportation plans to convey the land for the Library site to the Carter Presidential Library, Inc., by exchanging the site land for other land to be acquired by the Corporation, provided that the other land is of equal value and can serve a transportation need. The Library Corporation has not yet acquired the land to be exchanged for the site of the proposed Carter Library and, therefore, the exchange has not yet occurred.

The Carter Presidential Library is planned to be located adjacent to the Carter Center, which will be a complex of three structures with surrounding grounds and two lakes. The Library

and the Center are to be constructed concurrently and, for economy reasons, share a common heating and cooling system. Such sharing would require the allocation of heating and cooling costs between the Center and the Library and an agreement laying out the specific cost sharing arrangements will have to be developed. To realize further economies, similar arrangements may be entered into for the care of the grounds and for security for the Center/Library complex.

The Carter Library will be located about 2 miles east of downtown Atlanta and will be reached by a road to be known as the Presidential Parkway. The Georgia Department of Transportation contends that this 2.4 mile road will serve primarily as an east-west commuter road and will incidentally provide access to the Carter Library. Westbound traffic heading toward downtown Atlanta will flow around the northern side of the Library and Center site, and eastbound traffic will flow around the southern side of the Library and Center site.

Before construction of the parkway can begin the Federal Highway Administration must complete an Environmental Impact Statement in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. A draft statement was prepared and circulated for comment in the early part of 1983. Public meetings and a hearing were held in Atlanta in June 1983. As a result of the comments, these reviews, and discussions, the statement is now undergoing change. The Georgia Department of Transportation, which has been obtaining the primary input for the statement, anticipates that its submission to the Federal Highway

Administration will be completed before December 1983. Federal Highway Administration officials in Atlanta and Washington have told us that the final statement probably will not be available until April 1984.

While federal and state transportation representatives have said that the parkway is not intended to primarily serve the Carter Library, it apparently is viewed as an important aspect of the planning for the Carter Library by the Library Corporation. The Treasurer of the Library Corporation told us that the Corporation has not yet acquired land to exchange with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the Library site because of the delay and uncertainty surrounding the Environmental Impact Statement for the parkway. He said that if the parkway is not approved for construction, the Library Corporation may decide upon another site, but it would likely be in the same general vicinity as the currently planned site.

Department of the Interior comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement revealed that the site of the Carter Library may be one with historical significance as potentially the site on which General Sherman camped during his seizure and burning of Atlanta during the Civil War. The Interior comments suggested that further archeological information be developed to help determine the extent of the historical significance. GSA does not believe that a separate Environmental Impact Statement will be required for construction of the Carter Library. But, GSA has agreed to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment for the construction of the Library and relate this to information

on the Library construction that is discussed in the statement  
for the parkway.

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That concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman. My associates  
and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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