

NEAL P. DUNN, MD
2ND DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,
SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0902

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June 7, 2017

Acting Administrator Timothy O. Horne
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F St NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Acting Administrator:

I write to join civic leaders of Bay County, Florida, and the Bay County Board of County Commissioners in support of the accompanying proposal for retaining a federal courthouse in Panama City.

Panama City is the county seat of Bay County. More than 180,000 people call Bay County home. Its major employers include U.S. Navy and Air Force bases, a Coast Guard Station, Port Panama City, an international airport, and a shipyard, which is currently delivering the first Coast Guard ships in the Department of Homeland Security's largest acquisition program. In Bay County and the surrounding 5 counties served by the Panama City federal courthouse, more than 300,000 Floridians reside.

On December 31, 2018, the lease for the federal courthouse in Panama City is set to expire. Loss of the federal courthouse would place a substantial burden on local citizens who access justice and exercise their civic responsibilities in Panama City, as well as attorneys who practice in the federal court.

The proposal, as outlined in the accompanying video presentation, is to convert the Bay County Juvenile Justice Courthouse located at 533 E. 11th Street in Panama City into a federal courthouse for the U.S. District Court for Northern District of Florida. The 23,719 sq. ft. courthouse was constructed in 2003 to state-of-the-art security standards, and it offers 120 parking spaces, two courtrooms with Judges' Chambers, a sally port, holding cells and secure interview rooms. In addition, relocating the federal courthouse in Panama City to the facility at 533 E. 11th Street is a cost-neutral option; the Bay County Board of County Commissioners propose to lease the facility to the federal government at the same rate as the existing lease on the federal courthouse in Panama City.

The proposal reflects our community's commitment to a long-term solution for keeping a federal courthouse in Panama City. As you review our proposal, I request that you consider the size of the community presently served by the federal courthouse in Panama City, Florida, and partner with us to avoid closure, which would inflict undue burdens on residents and businesses. Further, to allow for conversion of the 533 E. 11th Street facility with minimal disruption of judicial proceedings, I respectfully request your timely consideration.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact Even Lee of my office at 202-225-5235 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,


Dr. Neal Dunn
Member of Congress