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Via electronic mail c/o ecash@dccouncil.us, Committee of the Whole Director

To: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Council of the District of Columbia
Washington, DC

Testimony by Katharina Hering, Before the Committee of the Whole (Chairman Phil Mendelson), on Office of Public Records, Monday, March 7, 2016

Good morning, Council Chair Mendelson and Council members. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Katharina Hering and I am here on behalf of the Friends of the DC Archives. I am also a professional archivist, and active on the steering committee of Society of American Archivists International Archival Affairs Roundtable. The FDCA are a group of professionals and others who advocate for the DC Archives. Our goals are: upgrading the physical plant and staff at the current Archives at Naylor Court; creating a new state-of-the-art Archives for the District; and developing a comprehensive records management program for the DC Government.

The Bowser Administration has taken a number of positive recent steps toward these goals. For Naylor Court, the Department of General Services has committed \$3 million to fix the roof and the HVAC system. The work is to be completed by this summer and will protect the building through 2018, the anticipated date to begin the move to a new facility. However, the new Public Records Administrator needs more staff -- to adequately serve the public, to professionally administer the collection and prepare for the move.

In national and international comparison, the staffing of the District's Office of Public Records of currently five FTEs is utterly inadequate. For instance, based on the 2015 State of State Records survey by the Council of State Archivists,¹ the Maryland State Archives – which manages a comparable volume of records as DC is expected to manage – has a staff of 90, the Virginia State Archives has 43 FTE, including 6.5 record managers, and the city/state archives of Berlin, Germany, which also manages a comparable volume of records as DC, has a staff of

75, including 28 professional archivists.² On the new Archives facility, DGS has released a report by Hartman-Cox-EYP that, for the first time, compiles in one document the requirements for a new facility, including the volume of storage required for the physical records held by most District agencies and the anticipated growth space. The report does not take into account materials from the DCPS and other repositories in the District; nor does it contain costs for demolition (if needed), the furnishings and the specialized equipment and data systems required to manage the city's records. We plan to work with DGS to solicit public comment on this important report and in the planning and creation of the new facility.

Coordinating records management for the whole DC Government is an enormous responsibility and task for the Office of Public Records. The three OPR-related Initiatives listed in the Secretary's pre-hearing submission (on retention schedules, records management officers and electronic records) are all laudable but it seems unlikely that these can be concluded by the listed target date of September 30, 2016 (seven months from now) and for all DC agencies. We urge the Secretary and the PRA to present a realistic plan to meet each goal. In this connection, we ask for a report on the \$600,000 that was transferred from the Archives to OCTO about a year ago.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions.

Katharina Hering

¹ Council of State Archivists, *The State of State Records*, 2015 edition, based on 2014 survey, part 2: tables, https://www.statearchivists.org/files/2914/4837/2086/ARM_Report_Tables_2014-2015.pdf.

² Email from Dr. Martin Luchterhandt, Landesarchiv Berlin, to Katharina Hering, March 2, 2016.