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May 23, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Vote “YES” on H.R. 4487 and H.R. 4465 during House Floor Vote

Dear Speaker Ryan:

We strongly urge you to support the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act of 2016, H.R. 4465, and the Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act of 2016, H.R. 4487, which the House will consider under suspension of the rules. These bills put forth sensible reforms to encourage more efficient use of federal real estate by reforming the leasing process; encouraging the disposal, sale and private redevelopment of underused or vacant federal buildings; and growing construction jobs as well as local, state and federal revenues through such redevelopment.

The Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act implements common sense policies to shrink the size of government and help ensure savings by selling or redeveloping high value properties, consolidating federal space, maximizing the utilization rates of space, and streamlining the disposal of unneeded assets. The bill establishes a Public Buildings Reform Board that will identify opportunities to reduce the real property inventory and make recommendations for the sale of at least \$8 billion worth of underutilized and vacant federal properties. The legislation also requires the General Services Administration to create and publish a single, comprehensive database of all federal real properties.

The Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act reforms the General Services Administration’s management of federal real estate assets and provides the agency with the necessary tools to negotiate the best lease deals possible on behalf of the taxpayers. Currently, more than half of GSA’s space inventory – 193 million square feet – is in commercially leased space. The annual cost to taxpayers in leased space payments is more than \$5.5 billion. Enabling the agency to better facilitate consolidations, reduce space, and take advantage of the current buyer’s market has the potential to save billions of dollars. The bill also calls for the sale and transfer of the existing U.S. Department of Energy Headquarters in exchange for constructing a new facility for the agency.

Passage of these bills will help grow the private construction market by encouraging redevelopment and a more efficient use of real property by the private sector. For example, GSA sold an abandoned heating plant in Washington, D.C., for \$19.5 million that will be converted into high-end condominiums, requiring private construction work of more than \$100 million. Consequently, we strongly urge you to vote “YES” on H.R. 4487 and H.R. 4465.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Shoaf
Senior Executive Director
Government Affairs