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FEDERAL AGENCIES AND CONFERENCE SPENDING

HEARING

BEFORE THE

FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

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FEDERAL AGENCIES AND CONFERENCE SPENDING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT,
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3 p.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom Coburn, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Coburn, Carper, and Akaka.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COBURN

Senator COBURN. The Federal Financial Management, Government Information and International Security Subcommittee of the Homeland Security Governmental Affairs Committee will come to order.

I want to thank all our guests for being here. I've asked Mr. Evertz to go first because I thought it appropriate insight for somebody who's worked within an agency for the agencies to hear what somebody on the ground feels about this. And we've asked him to testify first, and I would appreciate your indulgence as we do that. I know your time is valuable, and it's not meant to take your time from your obligations.

One of our key goals is to reestablish accountability and transparency within the Federal Government. And that's what drives the oversight work of this Subcommittee. Unaccountable spending of tax dollars is an abuse of power. It also is an abuse of the heritage of this country, where we've had a heritage of sacrifice for the next generation so their economic opportunities will be appropriate.

When Congress exercises its constitutionally-derived power by levying taxes, but then fails to insist upon accountability, we deprive Americans of the checks and balances to which they are entitled.

Last summer, I sent a letter to every Federal agency requesting a full accounting of conference spending and participation from 2000 to 2005. Some responses were very thorough. Some were indecipherable. And some didn't show up at all. And that is unacceptable. And it belies a greater problem within the Federal Government, that of a lack of availability of numbers to those who are in charge of making decisions based on those numbers.

The reports are astounding. Since the year 2000, we've spent $1.4 billion on conferences, including both underwriting conferences as well as sending Federal employees to conferences. Between 2000 and 2005, the total Federal conference spending increased 70 percent.

What amazes me even more is this increase occurred during a challenging time for our country, a time when our priorities should have been dramatically realigned. We are at war. We face tremendous natural disasters. We face unfettered growth in unfunded liabilities for our entitlement programs that are nearly $60 trillion.

Historically, presidents have shifted priorities under these conditions. During a time of great challenge and war, President Roosevelt cut non-defense spending by 20 percent. Several years later, President Truman cut non-military spending by 28 percent.

Things are different, however, today. For example, HUD increased conference spending a mind-blowing 340 percent over a 4-year period. Every other agency increased their conference spending significantly. I find that the hearing's purpose today is to find out the accountability and the reasons behind that.

We're going to hear testimony today arguing that because agency budgets are increasing, spending on meetings and travel must naturally increase proportionately. I would argue just the opposite. As discretionary and mandatory spending increase at a rate that is going to undermine our children and our grandchildren, it's all the more important to rein in spending on anything less than truly essential meetings. Increased budgets make these expenditures less defensible, not moreso.

There's a disconnect when conference attendance and spending are increasing at the exact time technology is dramatically reducing the need for travel and conferencing. In the modern telecommunications era, it is unnecessary to spend time and resources to finance so many conferences. Teleconferences and video conferencing, for example, can save money while allowing the same type of interaction and information sharing at a mere fraction of the cost. I'm not here to get into the weeds or details of specific conferences, but here are some examples that caught my eye.

In 2004, at least 59 conferences around the world were attended by HHS delegations of greater than 100 Federal employees, including over 1,000 attendees to sunny Orlando. In 2002, HHS sent 236 employees to a conference in Barcelona, Spain, spending $3.6 million on one single conference. Department of Education sent 158 employees to a conference in New Orleans.

Many conferences are set in beach, resort, casino, or European tourist destinations, such as Miami, Paris, Palm Springs, Berlin, Atlantic City, Rio, or Las Vegas where hotel rates are likely to be high and extracurricular temptation to skip the so-called vital conference sessions are even higher.

HUD participated in the Sacramento Home Ownership Fair, not in Sacramento or even in California, but in Honolulu, Hawaii. HUD also sent three people to Los Cabos, Mexico for the conference about U.S. real estate and urban economics. EPA was the primary sponsor of a national conference in that low-cost destination, Honolulu.

One witness today will share his conference experiences as a recent Federal official who worked both at the White House and at HHS. He will demonstrate great courage. He reports that there are few internal controls on conference attendance or spending, and questions the cost-effectiveness of the array of conferences which many deride as "spring break."

Ultimately, some of the problems could be avoided simply by increasing transparency. My hope is that this hearing is the beginning of that process. And I'm announcing today we'll have a follow-up hearing 4 months from today to see what process has been done in terms of accountability, transparency, and follow-up from the results of this hearing.

There should be a formal vetting and justification process for conference requests. I noted in the testimony that some agencies have put that in. And this is especially true when technology allows for teleconferencing and the use of internet to exchange information. Every department should document conference spending and attendance online in the interest of transparency.

One outcome of our investigation was the near-unanimous complaint from all the agencies about how hard it was to answer the very simple questions that we asked. Most responses came back with substantive gaps and missing data. Even these patchy and incomplete responses arrived months after the requested delivery date, which meant you had to do hard work to find the information rather than having the information at your fingertips.

The Commerce Department tells my staff that the response is in the mail. We've not received it yet. The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of the Interior submitted incomplete reports. Some of you just provided 1 year's worth of conference details, when you were asked for 5 years.

This difficulty responding to fairly simple questions highlights how poorly we track expenditures down to the dollar. Yet that is exactly the appropriate and reasonable expectation of taxpayers.

I do want to commend an exception to the rule. The Department of Energy submitted a highly detailed conference report, and actually tallied individual conference costs from 2001 to 2005. They provided a copy of their regulations regarding conference approval and travel.

Every year in their report to Congress, they detail conference participation and support for the previous year and the coming year's estimates. They require personnel to explore off-season travel costs, discourage resort and recreational destinations, and they consider "the potential for any adverse appearance associated with DOE participation." Although DOE, like other agencies, has increased their conference spending in recent years, at least they have internal controls regarding this spending.

As we go forward, I would encourage agencies to be sure that every conference attended by Federal employees passes the following tests:

Does the conference help further the Department's mission?

Could the information be shared through a teleconference or the internet?

Is the location appropriate and justified?

Is the number of employees attending justified?

Does participation in the conference validate or endorse ideas or values harmful to American interests?

Does the conference give a platform to ideas and panelists who undermine American interests?

Is the conference a wise use of tax dollars when we have an $8.1 trillion debt?

Every conference should be readily defensible, on its face, to regular Americans in terms of topic, location, and participants. It also should be available to them online on how we spend that money. It's time to scale back. It's time to make tough decisions. It's time to set priorities. I look forward to our dialogue.

I would also say that Senator Carper and I are dedicated to doing the oversight that's necessary to help you accomplish what you want to accomplish. This isn't a beating up session. It's not intended to be—we know that you have great intentions. We also know you're overwhelmed. Our goal is to help you build the process whereby you can make great decisions for the American taxpayer.

It gives me great privilege, after hearing his statement on the floor on the asbestos bill, to recognize my contributor in arms in tackling the financial problems of our country, Senator Carper.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARPER

Senator CARPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm honored to be here with you, and look forward to this hearing. I thought we had a pretty good one—was it yesterday?

Senator COBURN. In Chicago.

Senator CARPER. A field hearing in Chicago. And I would just add to what the Chairman has said, if I could. When you have a budget deficit as large as the one we have and one that it appears is going to be with us for some time if we continue to do what we've been doing, we need to look at every part of our budget.

We need to look at the taxes that were not collected that are owed. We need to look at the improper payments that are being made, especially overpayments. We need to look at entitlement programs to make sure that they're actually going to the people who need the help the most. And we need to look at all parts of our discretionary budgets, defense and non-defense.

And yesterday we were looking, in Chicago, at the management of Federal property. One of the questions that we asked of our witnesses was: What do we need to be doing in the Congress, Executive Branch, Legislative Branch? What do we need to be doing on real property management that would enable you to do a better job of managing your property—have fewer vacant buildings, less unused space, less under-utilized space, less land that frankly is serving no useful purpose. And they actually shared with us some ideas of things that we can do to help them.

And so we weren't there just to put them on the spot or put a spotlight on them in saying, what you're doing is bad or unlawful or anything like that. What we were looking for was to commend those who were doing a good job—several were—and to say to those that weren't, what can we learn from the people who are doing an especially good job? And so I thought it was most constructive. And my hope is that this will be as well.

I would like to say in addition to that, the Chairman is right. I think there's value, frankly, in pulling people together to meet face to face; not all the time, but there's value in doing that. And 10 or 15 years ago, we couldn't do that electronically, but today we can.

And I was in a briefing in the White House not too long ago—I think it was last month, Mr. Chairman—and we were meeting with the President and Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And we had about 12 of our colleagues around the table.

And joining us live in color from Baghdad were Dr. Khalilzad, our Ambassador, and General George Casey, our military leader in Iraq. And the idea of having us all go over to meet or for them to come over here and to meet just makes no sense. But we were able to do it using live video, and that's the sort of thing that we need to be doing more of.

The other thing I would say, in addition to finding out what meetings, what conferences, can just as easily be held by video, or some of the stuff we do—I'm sure you do it, too—we do it by speakerphone, something as rudimentary as just doing it on the phone with a bunch of people gathered around these different microphones, and doing it that way.

The other thing is we find that we can save a lot of money. And we do some travel that's government-related. We also do travel that's personal, back and forth, maybe to our States. And we do travel that is political, and as we go around the country for different events.

And what we've learned to do is to try to figure out how to handle all that travel, to do all that travel, more cost-effectively. I'll just give you a recent example. By booking flights a couple weeks early before the flight as opposed to a couple of days before the flight, you can save more than 50 or 75 percent of the cost of a ticket.

People in my neck of the woods, in Delaware, historically went up to Philadelphia to catch flights to go to places. And they found that if they were to either drive to BWI, Baltimore-Washington International, or take the train to BWI, get off at BWI, and take a flight out of BWI, they could save a ton of money, and catch flights to take them where they needed to go by airplane for a lot less dollars.

In fact, we found that people could actually pay for their train ticket from Wilmington to BWI, get the airline, fly the airline out of BWI, fly back into BWI, take the train and go home, and save a lot of money, hundreds of dollars, in the meantime.

So what I hope that we talk about today is not just is it important to bring people together for a conference, but on those occasions when it is, are there other things that we can be doing when we say that meeting has to take place—maybe not in Mexico, maybe not in Hawaii, maybe not even in Orlando; maybe in Delaware, maybe in Tulsa, where I've been before—that we find a really cost-effective, efficient way to get there and come home.

Thank you.

Chairman COBURN. Thank you.

Just to summarize why we are diligent, this last year we added a half a trillion dollars to the national debt. And I know how numbers are manipulated in Congress, and I know how they're manipulated by the Administration. And the deficit doesn't reflect the true cost of what we're doing to our kids.

I also would note that in the year 2000, $88 million was spent on travel and conferences, and in the year 2005, $225 million was spent on travel and conferences. No American in this country has had that kind of increase in their travel budgets or conferencing budgets. You can't find a firm that's done it. You can't find an individual organization. But the government has somehow seen fit that's applicable to us.

And the whole purpose of this hearing today is to look at it, to cause you all to look at it, to be better stewards, and for us to make sure you know we're going to continue to look at it. And it's not just travel budgets. As many of you know, this Subcommittee is looking at everything.

We're going to have 42 hearings this year on oversighting expenditures within the Federal Government with the hope of sharpening our ability to control the expenses. Every dollar that we spend on a conference that could be spent saving somebody's life with HIV or treating malaria or treating TB or drilling a water well for somebody in Africa is real dollars making a real difference in peoples' lives. So the purpose for us doing this is noble, and it's not to cast aspersions or to say you care. We know you care. What we want to do is help sharpen the focus.

Let me introduce to you Scott Evertz. He's the Vice President for International Affairs for OraSure Technologies. Mr. Evertz I know well. I've worked with him in the past when I was out of government. He works with lawmakers and implementing partners of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Geneva.

He previously served as the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Global AIDS Initiatives, where he developed and implemented HHS strategy to combat HIV/AIDS. He also is the former Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. Your full testimony, Mr. Evertz, will be made a part of the record. You are recognized, and if you would, please let us hear from you.

TESTIMONY OF SCOTT H. EVERTZ,[1] FORMER DIRECTOR, WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY, VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS FOR ORASURE TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. EVERTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, and good afternoon, Senator Carper.

Senator Ranking Member, you stole my line. I was going to start by suggesting that conferences be held in Dover and Tulsa henceforth and hereafter, to gain favor with the Subcommittee.

The perspective I bring here is, as Chairman Coburn suggests, as a former government employee, political appointee in the Bush Administration. Senator Coburn, you mentioned our time together, when you served as co-chair of PACHA, the President's Advisory

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Evertz appears in the Appendix on page 32.

Council on HIV and AIDS. I enjoyed our work together and want to thank you again for your service in that capacity.

As you suggest, from July 2002 to April 2005, I served as Special Assistant to Secretary Thompson on global HIV/AIDS issues. And it was in this context that I observed the issues that your Subcommittee is seeking to address. What I discovered and witnessed was an attitude of entitlement among certain officials in terms of attendance at conferences. And I would suggest a downright arrogance when attendance at those conferences was challenged by higher-ups in the agency.

It appeared to me personally that there was a limitless travel budget, and that one could pick and choose which of these conferences to attend. And as you suggest subtly, and I would suggest less subtly, there's a perverse incentive to pick Los Cabos over a conference that may be held in Tulsa, with all due respect.

During my tenure in the Administration, I discovered that these conferences and meetings were often a waste of time and money, and that there were other technologies that could enable us to access the good information that was being shared at these conferences.

During my tenure at the White House and at HHS, I never attended the International AIDS Conference held in Barcelona and then subsequently in Bangkok, Thailand while I was with the Administration. During that period, though, I would note that I and others in the Administration developed the architecture for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria without the benefit of having attended those conferences.

We did so, however, in close consultation with multinational organizations and using many of the technologies to which you refer. So clearly, it is possible to address the pandemics that you reference—AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria—without attending costly conferences.

The individual who became my boss, Secretary Thompson, attended the Barcelona conference in 2002, and as many of you will remember, was not able to engage in the so-called exchange of ideas that occurs at these conferences because he was shouted down. He was shouted down, in fact, sir, by many individuals whose attendance was paid for by the U.S. Government.

So when you reference figures around conferences, not only are you talking about Federal Government employees that are attending those conferences, but others who are on scholarships from one of the many agencies, or whose NGO is supported by the United States. I can highlight examples during the question-and-answer session.

But it was always truly amazing to me that we were funding nongovernmental organizations and literally enabling them to yell at Federal officials at conferences. I was one of those officials in one of my first appearances in Atlanta at a CDC prevention conference, and it was all grantees in the audience. And we were simply there to talk and to exchange ideas.

Even with the United States sending more than 200 attendees to the Bangkok conference which followed the Barcelona conference, critics of our Administration bemoaned the severe restrictions

being placed on attendance. And quite frankly, sir, there were many of us, and still are, in the Administration who did not consider 200 individuals severe restrictions.

A noted journalist and now Senior Fellow for Global Health at the Council of Foreign Relations first criticized the Administration for limiting attendance at the Bangkok conference, but having attended the conference herself, summarized what she thought to be a less than useful venture by saying, "To be blunt, top HIV laboratory researchers simply don't come to the international gathering any more, finding it irrelevant."

The cost of that conference was nearly $17 million, according to organizers. But I would argue there are ancillary costs and expenditures that, beyond the scope of what we're talking about today, are outrageous if you care about fighting HIV/AIDS.

The pharmaceutical companies and others who have a vested interest in the HIV/AIDS industry sponsor lavish cocktail parties and events that cost into the millions. So if you truly were to look at the cost of a conference such as that, it's well above the $17 million that's in my testimony and that you've referenced.

Now, I see on the poster here, life-saving drugs for 5,000 individuals living with HIV for an entire year is what HHS could have paid for with conference costs. Let me suggest something else. Optimal AIDS combination therapy, which has definitely lowered in price, but optimal therapy costs up to $12,000 per year per patient. That's a very high number, depending upon the regimen and the payor. However, even at the optimal cost, if you take the cost of the Bangkok conference, we could have put 1,500 additional individuals living with HIV/AIDS on ARVs.

Perhaps more alarming is the fact that we could administer about 3.4 million doses of Nevirapine for the cost of this conference, which as you know, sir, prevents the transmission of HIV from mother to child.

Now, these conferences have a value, so lest anyone conclude that I'm suggesting they be discontinued, I'm not. But we certainly need to consider, as you suggest, sir, in an era of budget deficits, and in an era when there are waiting lists in this country for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, which is part of the Ryan White Care Act, and increasingly there are countries, even in the PEPFAR initiative, that are having trouble getting as many individuals on ARVs as the President would like because of budget constraints, that we look at ways to do this differently and we look at what some—and you mentioned in your opening statement, sir, conferencing that's spring break, in essence.

Now, I'm happy in the question and answers to provide examples. But let me give you one example of a trip that I went on that would not be captured—so this is illustrative because this would not be captured through any of the numbers that we're talking about today, and that is travel at the invitation of a nongovernmental organization.

I would suggest to you that in any given month, I could have chosen one or two opportunities to be the guest of a nongovernmental organization in my capacity at the White House and at HHS. But as you know, it was that Federal agency, the Executive Office of the President or HHS, that had to foot the bill.

I attended one of those trips, and if I may digress for just a second, we were in a remote area in the bush in South Africa where they were testing individuals for HIV. These incredible volunteers—at this point they were using the finger prick device, not the oral HIV tests that my company markets and sells—but they were using that device and they were testing individuals for HIV.

And so we said, well, walk us through this process. Test one of us and then tell us what you do. And they started by explaining how difficult it was for individuals to get to this testing site because it was—no one lives close to anyone in this part of South Africa. But individuals would take the time. They would go to this testing site which—I loosely refer to as a clinic—be tested, and this was before the era of the rapid test or as many rapid tests, and these individuals had to come back to get their results.

Many of them did. And of course, then we said, well, then what do you do? And the young woman who does the counseling and testing said, "Well, we tell them their results, and if they're positive, we talk about nutrition and ways to protect their partners and their family." And she kind of lowered her head. And she said, "But we can't give them treatment because we have no treatment."

And it was at that point that the irony of a whole group of us standing there from the United States, most all of us from the U.S. Government, some of your colleagues from the House, and had literally no way to help these individuals.

Many of us went back and we worked diligently on the PEPFAR initiative. But my point is that's inexcusable. And it literally reached—it sunk home with me because on this trip, one of our leisure activities was a safari, and that I had been given the opportunity to attend—to participate in a safari and then had to stand here and listen to a woman say, "We don't have treatment." Obviously, there's a whole bunch of logistical issues that would disable her from getting treatment. But it's inexcusable that there's no treatment because of lack of money.

I'd like to applaud my former boss, Secretary Thompson, for directing his Special Assistant for International Affairs to try to get a handle on this.

Senator COBURN. Let me get you to summarize, if you will.

Mr. EVERTZ. Yes, sir. It looks like we didn't, quite frankly. But they tried. Dr. Bill Steiger, who is that Special Assistant, put an end, basically, to business class travel, which was something that Secretary Thompson didn't appreciate when he started traveling so much, but nonetheless sat in the back of the plane while, again, individuals from NGOs that we're funding sat in the front of the plane.

Finally, and I will conclude now with a little anecdote, something that's also not captured, I don't think, in any of the numbers that we're talking about today is attendance at meetings of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and other such multinational organizations. The United States, as are all delegations, allowed to send 10 individuals to these meetings, which are held quarterly.

I witnessed the difficulty in paring down the list to 10. And as a good friend of mine, and someone who's still with the government so I'm not going to single her out for fear of reprisal, but suggested,

"So we spend all this money to send government officials to Global Fund board meetings to make sure the Global Fund doesn't waste our money." And the answer is yes, because some of those meetings are in very nice places.

Thank you, sir. I welcome your questions.

Senator COBURN. Just a few questions for you. In terms of abstracts of scientific papers, one of the things that we're going to hear is that NIH needs to travel and needs to be there. And there certainly is some validity to that.

On most of these conferences, aren't the abstracts of the papers that are going to be presented available prior to the conference?

Mr. EVERTZ. Yes, sir. As I suggest in my written testimony, when I mentioned that I never attended the International AIDS Conference, my staff and I, however, did access transcripts, manuscripts, and materials that you reference so that we could do our job.

And quite frankly, it's a lot easier to do that sometimes in the office setting than it is when there are, as you referred in your statement to, temptations to skip. We all were tempted to skip, and I will tell you right now that I did—not often, but did. It's quite easy.

Senator COBURN. You indicated there were numerous conferences on the same topic throughout the year attended by the same people, in your written testimony. From your experience, are multiple conferences useful to fostering new ideas and solutions, or a misuse of funds and employee time that could be better spent?

Mr. EVERTZ. Well, I'm going to answer cautiously. I'm not going to answer just flat-out yes because I think that there are some conferences where there are opportunities that could not be gained otherwise.

But there is a conference circuit, sir. And I refer to this in my written testimony as a set, if you will, of individuals that you do see in Geneva or Doha or Siemreab, Cambodia. And there's an expectation—and I will attest to it—an expectation that certain people be there.

Guess what happens when President Bush's AIDS czar doesn't show up at something? Well, that's outrageous. Well, criticize me for what I did or didn't do in that position, but don't criticize me for not being at conferences because in my estimation, there would have been no added value, or value added, if I attended everything on the circuit. I wouldn't have done anything in Washington. We would not have passed the PEPFAR initiative.

Senator COBURN. One final question. If you were to look at your time in HHS and the White House and look at the number of conferences, what percentage of those could have been done through teleconferencing or, in your opinion, were absolutely necessary?

Mr. EVERTZ. I would say—given again the technology that you mentioned, I would say at least 75 percent of those conferences, at the very least, could have their attendance pared way down. I mean, there is a value in face-to-face, and I'm sure that the airline industry would quarrel with some of the technologies that we're talking about because there is a value in being face-to-face and there is valuable hallway discussions, as it's referred to.

But let me kind of qualify my answer again. I would say of all those conferences that—and I've got a calendar here for 2006. There's one every month somewhere, Orlando or Montreal. Oh, here's three: Jacksonville, Quebec, and Arlington. I'm not going to the Arlington one. It's right across the river. Dallas, Miami, Amsterdam, or Hollywood, Florida. That's cool. Versailles.

I don't think—and I don't see how anyone ever unpacks if they attend all of these things. And the answer is, maybe they don't. Pardon the cynicism. But there would be ways. I mean, for instance, the conference in Versailles is the 22nd Conference on Sexually Transmitted Infections. I would be willing to bet that you in your practice, sir, could access all of the information that would be discussed at this conference without traveling to Versailles, and better serving your patients in Oklahoma.

Senator COBURN. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. Thank you so much for being with us today and for your presentation and responding to our questions.

I just want to return to something you said. There is value in some cases to being there, not just to be a participant in the formal program of a conference, but to have the opportunity to meet some people, to talk to them, maybe outside of the conference, maybe over breakfast or dinner, and to create—actually to form some relationships that can later on pay real dividends for the people that we're trying to serve. So there's value that sometimes is a bit hard to measure. But I agree with what you said there.

I just have one question, and it's a question I ask from time to time of folks that appear before us. Knowing what you know, having seen what you've seen in this regard, what advice would you have to us as to how to reduce the incidence of travel that's not well thought out, and frankly, not especially fruitful?

Mr. EVERTZ. That's a good question, Senator. And it sounds like DOE, the Department of Energy, has been doing some of that. I suggested to you some of that which was implemented at HHS. And I would argue those numbers would look worse, perhaps, if what Secretary Thompson initiated was not—did not happen, for instance, the banning of business class travel.

The other thing or aspect that was changed is tacking on a personal vacation to official government travel. And this was disallowed. And actually, it's my understanding that this was disallowed even electronically at HHS by looking at someone's travel orders and determining if in fact a conference ends on such-and-such a date and their return date is 5 days later, guess what? The conference was in Cabo and they're not returning for 5 days? Again, I say cynically, but guess what they're doing? And you and I have paid for their flight there and tacked on a vacation.

So practically speaking, get rid of that kind of stuff. Practically speaking, you get rid of business class travel and you're talking thousands of dollars per ticket. You referenced cost savings in the airline industry.

The other thing that I would suggest is a more robust, rationed process of identifying the rationale for attending. I suggested to you that 10 individuals from the U.S. Government attend the Global Fund board meeting every time the board meeting is held, and that it's usually difficult to limit it to 10.

Now, I work closely with those individuals, and so, Senator, I thank you for suggesting that I'm courageous in speaking before you because I wouldn't want to tell you who of the 10 I wouldn't want attending. But guess what? Ten people do not need to attend the Global Fund board meeting.

But there's no process by which the rationale for travel is determined, at least in my experience at HHS. Now, at the White House, which has no money, I didn't travel much at all.

Senator CARPER. Again, my question is: What advice would you have for us?

Mr. EVERTZ. The advice—yes.

Senator CARPER. Concrete things that we can do to reduce the amount of travel that's just poorly thought through.

Mr. EVERTZ. Well, I think one thing is to have the agencies do what HHS has tried, which is to limit number of attendees. I think that's a little simplistic because that doesn't entirely get at the issue of cost. But really, the agencies need to be held accountable for these numbers, and those responsible for signing off on travel need to be held accountable if the numbers are increasing at a time of budget deficits.

Senator CARPER. OK. The other thing I would add to that, and I thank you for that response, Mr. Evertz, I would say to my staff, when you're thinking of doing something and the question of cost is a consideration, you're not sure that it's the right expenditure that actually helps us do our job better and to serve better, just imagine a newspaper article—and we only have one statewide newspaper in Delaware—just imagine a story on the front page of the newspaper above the fold that talks about the particular event we're going to travel to or the meeting or convention we're going to participate in.

And if it meets that test and you feel like you'd be happy to see that story, then let's go ahead and do it. If not, let's find another way to skin that cat. Thank you.

Chairman COBURN. Mr. Evertz, thank you very much.

We'll start with our second panel now, and I will introduce them.

Michael Ryan is the Deputy Chief Financial Officer of the EPA, Environmental Protection Agency. He's served as the EPA's Deputy CFO since 2000. He is responsible for managing strategic planning, budgeting, financial management, performance measurement, analysis, and accountability functions. He previously served as the agency's controller, and has held positions in the State Department and Department of Defense.

James Martin, Assistant Chief Financial Officer for Financial Management, Department of Housing and Urban Development. Mr. Martin joined the HUD CFO office in 2000. He works on eliminating the Department's high risk and material weakness issues, improving the content of the annual performance and accountability report, the PART report, and he coordinates HUD's efforts to implement President Bush's management agenda. Mr. Martin has served in a variety of capacities at HUD since joining the Department in 1983.

Sid Kaplan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Strategic Performance and Planning, Bureau of Resource Management, at the Department of State. Mr. Kaplan serves as the Acting Assistant Sec-

retary for Resource Management and Chief Financial Officer. He's a member of the Senior Foreign Service and has held numerous positions within the State Department. He's the former Managing Director of the International Financial Services Directorate.

Charles Johnson, Assistant Secretary of the Budget in the Department of Health and Human Services. He is the Assistant Secretary for Budget, Technology, and Finance at HHS. He previously served as the Chief Financial Officer of the EPA. He's the former President of the Huntsman Cancer Foundation, and he has held a number of positions in Utah State government. He also has considerable experience in the private sector.

Thank you all for being here today. You each will be recognized. We won't stay tight within the 5-minute rule, and your entire statement will be made a part of the record.

And Mr. Johnson, I'll recognize you first.

TESTIMONY OF CHARLES JOHNSON,[1] ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR BUDGET, TECHNOLOGY AND FINANCE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Coburn, Senator Carper. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on the topic of Federal agencies and conference spending.

HHS is the principal Federal agency responsible for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. We have more than 300 grant programs. We are the Nation's largest health insurer and the largest government grant-making agency.

I'm not here to defend any specific conferences, but I can tell you that good communication to disseminate and share information is a key to our success. Appropriate conferences play a major role in facilitating this communication both with grantees and between grantees on policies, goals, best practices, and new discoveries. HHS's participation in conferences can be a cost-efficient way for the Department to communicate with as many stakeholders as it deals with.

Last year, in response to your request, Mr. Chairman, HHS compiled information on the total amount spent on conference activities in fiscal years 2000 through 2004, and provided you an estimate of the expenditures for 2005. We have now updated our 2005 information.

This updated information on conference spending shows that we are up about a third from fiscal 2000, but we have been relatively constant since 2003 and actually decreased our conference spending from fiscal 2004 to 2005. Conference spending increases are in two major agencies, National Institutes of Health and Administration for Children and Families.

Sharing scientific information, as has been pointed out, is an important form of leveraging research activities and hopefully results in a decrease in those research expenditures. ACF, the Administration for Children and Families, has had a lot of new programs over the last 5 years. But despite the fact that they've had these pro-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Johnson with an attachment appears in the Appendix on page 37.

grams, in the year 2004, they had a higher expenditure than in 2005.

I think this brings out an important management principle. That is as follows. With launching a new program, we may incur startup costs. However, when information has been shared with the relevant parties, a reduction in conference spending will be expected. That's an important stewardship matter, and I think the ACF has followed that.

Having said that, I agree that additional oversight can improve our stewardship. As I reviewed the current policies, I felt that we must tighten our conference policies in two areas: First, in the selection of the conferences, and the programs and policies being presented at those conferences; and second, in the financial areas surrounding conferences.

To that end, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, we have issued a memorandum to all HHS operating division heads that strengthen the Department's current policy on conferences. This memorandum places additional responsibility on operating division heads in determining content and sponsorship of conferences and in controlling costs.

It emphasizes the need to more actively engage with grantees to assure that they are aware of our policies and procedures. It adds additional approvals on travel. In summary, we have strengthened our oversight on conferences, which in turn will help us contain costs.

As evidenced by our most recent clean audit, the seventh in a row, HHS has a commitment to strong and transparent financial management. We are continuously monitoring our internal controls and strengthening our Departmental policies. I personally have a strong belief in accountability and transparency, and pledge to you that we will do better.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Carper, this concludes my testimony. But I stand ready to answer any questions that you or any other Members of the Committee may have on this topic.

Chairman COBURN. Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Mr. Kaplan.

TESTIMONY OF SID KAPLAN,[1] ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. KAPLAN. Chairman Coburn and Senator Carper, thank you for the invitation to testify today.

As you well know, the conduct of diplomacy frequently requires face-to-face interactions, venues for the exchange of ideas, and meetings that foster personal relationships which are critical to the success of our mission.

Conferences are an integral means by which the Department of State conducts our Nation's international affairs. The Department conducts diplomatic relations with 188 countries through over 260 posts around the world, and participation in conferences is an effective means to promote advancement of issues across a wide array of operational and policy areas.

For some international organizations, conferences are the primary means by which business is conducted. The United States

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Kaplan appears in the Appendix on page 48.

also advances and protects hemispheric interests through participation in the meetings of the Organization of American States and related organizations. The United States realizes similar goals reflecting key regional relationships through participation in meetings of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, or APEC, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, the United Nations regional commissions, and other signatories to major treaties.

Active State Department participation in international conferences ensures that the United States maintains our influence, and promotes and protects key U.S. interests in the formulation of policy, the management of the Department's operations, and the deliberations of multilateral international organizations in which the United States has membership.

The Department's participation in conferences is often essential to achieving a desired outcome, and cost of attendance is justified by what was or was not accomplished due to U.S. engagement. For example, failure to attend a conference that results in action not supported by our policies could require a greater expenditure of resources to address the action in retrospect than it would have cost to participate in the conference.

The Department has taken steps to institute controls over conference participation and to stem the increase in conference costs. The Department is also continuously exploring and making use of ways to leverage technology and resources so that the Department's participation in meaningful conferences is facilitated in the most cost-effective way possible.

The funding used to support conferences is managed within each of the Department's bureaus. Therefore, bureaus and, consequently, U.S. missions overseas must prioritize funding for conferences against other competing requirements.

In 2004, the State Department instituted a policy requiring advance approval from the office of the Under Secretary for Management in order to attend or host conferences. Under the policy, requests to host or hold conferences, workshops, or other meetings to which travel is required and where 25 or more Department personnel will participate must be submitted 120 days in advance. The request must be justified by demonstrating the benefit to the Department, the outcome or results expected, security risks, cost, and how the conference advances the Department's strategic priorities.

The Department is also using technology to increase efficiency and cut conference costs. The use of digital video conferencing, or DVC, is on the rise. As an example, rather than attending regional management or budget conferences, I and in most cases a small panel of management colleagues have frequently opted to deliver our presentations using DVC.

Also, while not conferences per se, the Bureau of Resource Management regularly uses DVC to conduct our mission performance plan reviews with embassy teams, substantially reducing international travel and costs. In short, as DVC technology has improved, this practice is becoming more prevalent, and I expect it to only grow in the future, which will contribute to greater cost-effectiveness.

The conference spending data reported covers a 5-year period. The report includes information on conferences with a variety of

purposes, including policy issues related to Afghanistan, Iraq, the Global War on Terror, and the fight against AIDS, as well as management and professional development conferences. Most recently, conference spending has decreased from $30.9 million in fiscal year 2004 to $26.5 million in fiscal year 2005, primarily due to non-recurring conferences such as the hosting of the OAS General Assembly and the increased use of technology.

As the Acting Chief Financial Officer, I can assure you that the Department will continue to avoid unnecessary conference expenditures and, where appropriate, to vigorously pursue more cost-effective methods of participating.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Subcommittee, and I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

Chairman COBURN. Mr. Kaplan, thank you. Mr. Martin.

TESTIMONY OF JAMES M. MARTIN,[1] ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. MARTIN. Chairman Coburn, Ranking Member Carper, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the topic of Federal agencies and conference spending. My testimony focuses on the nature, extent, and benefits of conference spending at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Given the current Federal budget climate, I agree with you both that it is more important than ever that every Federal dollar be properly spent with a clear mission-related purpose and benefit. HUD sponsors, cosponsors, or approves staff to participate in conferences for a variety of mission-related purposes.

HUD's significant and diverse program activities serve millions of American households and most communities. These programs are delivered through thousands of third party program administrators, including units of State and local government, public housing agencies, private mortgage lenders, nonprofit and for-profit housing sponsors, developers, and managers, and various faith-based and community-based service organizations.

Effective communication of program goals and requirements to program beneficiaries and our third party program administrators is a critical component of HUD's program control environment. Such communications are in keeping with the Government Accountability Office's standards for effective internal control in the Federal Government.

Most of HUD's third party program administrators and program beneficiaries are represented by national and/or local associations or interest groups. HUD's participation in conferences sponsored by or for these associations or interest groups is often a cost-efficient and effective way for the Department to communicate with its many program stakeholders.

Another factor in an effective system of internal control is management's commitment to competence in its own workforce. Some conference participation is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Martin with an attachment appears in the Appendix on page 53.

abilities of HUD staff to better enable them to perform their jobs and to support HUD's mission.

Mr. Chairman, in response to your request, HUD compiled information on the total amount of conference spending in fiscal years 2001 through 2005. Our queries for that period indicate that HUD's conference spending ranged from a low of $3.2 million in 2001 to a high of $13.9 million in fiscal year 2005.

In analyzing that spending trend over the 5-year period, 2001 was found to be an uncharacteristically low period for conference spending due to the change in Administrations and leadership during that period. The increased conference spending between fiscal years 2002 and 2005 was largely due to a greater focus on promoting the Department's revised strategic coals and program changes designed to increase performance results.

HUD's mission is to increase home ownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. The list of 989 conferences supported by HUD in fiscal year 2005 conforms to HUD's mission and goals. Although there is no specific limit on how much HUD can spend on conference support or participation, spending is limited by HUD's normal budget constraints.

Nearly 31 percent of HUD's total fiscal year 2005 conference spending was from the public housing technical assistance program funds that were appropriated for such purposes. In the case of program technical assistance funds, HUD is required to submit an annual spending plan for Congressional approval before these funds can be used for conferences or other planned purposes.

Conference activities not funded by program technical assistance funds must be funded out of HUD's limited salaries and expense fund. The S&E fund has little discretionary funding available for conference participation after covering the cost of HUD's salaries and other normal operating expenses. The total $13.9 million spent on conferences in fiscal year 2005 represented a very small percentage of HUD's total enacted budget of $33.7 billion that year.

Supervisory approval of conference participation is required in all cases, along with separate processing and approval of any associated funding required for travel expense, conference facility or equipment rental, or materials development, or printing costs associated with conference participation.

My written testimony provides several examples where HUD's conference participation is believed to be a contributing factor to increasing program performance results. Those examples include HUD's efforts to increase home ownership, record home ownership levels today. And we particularly focus on minority home ownership. Minority home ownership is also at record levels.

Our efforts to promote program participation or increase program participation by faith-based and community service organizations and to reduce improper rental housing assistance payments are all areas where we believe performance has improved as a result of our participation in conferences to communicate program requirements and goals with our program stakeholders.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that I've been able to shed some light on the controlled nature of HUD's participation in conference activities and the benefits derived from those activities. That concludes my

testimony, and I stand ready to answer any questions either of you may have. Thank you.

Chairman COBURN. Thank you very much. Mr. Ryan.

TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL W.S. RYAN,[1] DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. RYAN. Good afternoon, Chairman Coburn, Senator Carper. On behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency, I'd like to thank you and the Members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today on the subject Federal agencies and conference spending.

EPA appreciates your interest in this topic. We share your concern for efficient, effective, and appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars, whether for conferences or for any other purpose.

Conference must promote EPA's mission to promote human health and the environment. We carry out this mission through the work of some 17,500 employees located in Washington, DC, 10 major regional offices, and other facilities across the country.

Our work is organized in terms of five long-term strategic goals. These goals shape the way we plan, budget, and account for our work. We organize our budget in terms of results and annual goals that relate to these strategic goals.

We also account for spending by these goals with reference to specific programs and projects that may or may not involve conferences. In this way, we aim to account for spending in terms of the results of our work.

Our cost accounting system follows the structure of our strategic and annual goals. And for this reason, we had to do further analysis to produce the kind of information you requested and to identify trends in spending on conferences. Based on analysis of the detailed data submitted to the Subcommittee, I would estimate that EPA's spending on formal conferences is in the range of $16 to $19 million annually.

EPA has broad authority under civil statutes to conduct formal conferences to deliver useful environmental information to the public and to other Federal agencies. These statutes include the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, Solid Waste Disposal Act, National Environmental Policy Act, the Superfund and Brownfields statutes, and the Government Employees Training Act.

A number of EPA programs rely on close coordination with community groups, intergovernmental organizations, and members of the regulated community. EPA generally supports conferences that bring together different constituencies to promote collaboration and partnerships for the Nation's environmental programs.

Many EPA conferences are designed to inform a non-Federal audience about important developments in environmental policy. Other conferences promote technology transfer, research, cooperation between stakeholders with different perspectives, voluntary actions, and other non-regulatory approaches to protecting the environment and public health.

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Ryan appears with an attachment in the Appendix on page 60.

Decisions on conference attendance and support are not made centrally for the agency. Generally, these decisions are made at the appropriate management level within individual program and regional offices. For example, Assistant Administrators or Regional Administrators may make decisions on whether to hold conferences on mission-related topics. Individuals' attendance must be approved by their supervisors.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, in the current budget climate, it is incumbent on all of us to take a hard look at spending to identify greater efficiencies, reduce costs, and produce meaningful results. We get better results when our work brings together the perspectives of many groups that make up the American community.

Congress has recognized this by creating laws that provide for conferences to support coordination and information sharing. At the same time, we also need to be careful stewards to ensure that costs for a conference are appropriate and contained.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to examine how we manage conference spending, and to make sure that we are using these resources for the greatest benefit. And if I can depart from my text for a moment, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you also for your statement in which you declared the intention to help us work on this issue. And I hope in that spirit we can enter into this conversation.

And that concludes my oral testimony, and I would be pleased to answer any of your questions.

Chairman COBURN. Well, thank each of you. I have a few questions just to kind of get down to some detail

First, Mr. Martin, in 2001 you all had a $3.2 million expenditure for conferences. And I think your statement was that's because of a change in administration. It leads me to ask: Did HUD carry out its responsibilities that year?

Mr. MARTIN. Absolutely.

Senator COBURN. But they did it with $3.2 million worth of conference spending, and yet they carried out their responsibilities? So it begs the further question, is if in 2001 they could carry out their responsibilities with $3.2 million, why are we at $13.9 million now?

Mr. MARTIN. I think my statement was that during that change in administration and leadership, the following year there was a focus on revised strategic goals, increased emphasis on home ownership, increasing faith-based and community organization participation in our programs, and just a new direction.

It just was a lull period in 2001 compared to prior periods.

Senator COBURN. It's true you all are having trouble with improper payments because so much of what you do goes through to other agencies. One of the things we've been working on is the Improper Payments Act, and I know you all are having trouble getting your hands around that. And I'm going to give you all deference to try to do that this year.

But the fact is, as an agency, you don't know what you're improperly paying for. How do you know that the expenditures for travel and conferencing accurately reflects the needs of the agency?

Mr. MARTIN. And that's all budgeted for and planned within the Department, and our execution of our salaries and expense fund.

And clearly, one of the goals that was focused on in 2002 was the reduction of improper payments.

And that required us to issue updated and approved program guidance and disseminate that guidance to our program administrators, public housing authorities, and private owners, to provide training to their staff and our staff on that new guidance. Those were all contributing factors to reducing those improper payment levels over that period of time.

Senator COBURN. But you all are out of compliance right now with improper payments, right, under the law?

Mr. MARTIN. No. We believe we're in full compliance with IPIA.

Senator COBURN. We believe you're not. And we'll have that discussion at a later time.

Mr. MARTIN. Right. We owe you a response on February 14. Yes.

Senator COBURN. OK. I also would note that the Senate is on record for limiting your conference numbers, an amendment that I offered when I saw it. And it was stripped in conference. But nevertheless, the Senate is on record to try to limit that. The whole goal was to raise the awareness—it wasn't to tell you how to run your organization. It was to raise the awareness that this is going to a faster level.

And I'm going to ask each of you this: What percentage of the conferences that you're doing now are teleconferences or digital video conferencing? And what percentage that are planned for the future could be done that way? And then the third part of the question: Do you have a line item budgeted in your total budget for conferences and travel related to those conferences?

Mr. Martin, you can answer first, and then the others can answer.

Mr. MARTIN. OK. Our use of satellite broadcasts and webcasts is on the rise. The preponderance of our internal staff training and information dissemination is all done through satellite broadcasts and webcasts. And we're using it more frequently to communicate with our program stakeholders externally. That's definitely on the rise.

HUD has a satellite broadcast center in its headquarters. We have downlink capability to all 86 HUD offices. We recently expanded what we call HUD TV to our public housing authorities, which administer the preponderance of our program dollars. So that's been a great benefit to provide training and information to them through those means.

So it's definitely on the rise. We do not have a separate line item budget for it. I think it's probably a good idea for us to try to provide that kind of focus and oversight on it, as you suggest, going forward.

Senator COBURN. OK. Do you actually have a budget that says, here's how much we're going to spend?

Mr. MARTIN. It's somewhat limited by—the services are largely contracted. The satellite broadcast center has——

Senator COBURN. No, I'm talking about for overall the conferences. In other words, how do lower level managers make a decision about which conference is most effective for us, if we've got all these conferences and we don't have a fixed budget? How do they make a decision to prioritize those?

In other words, if they're just saying, this can come out of our fund and we think this is fine, we'll use it for budget rather than having a fixed amount for conferences and travel? There is not a fixed amount for conference and travel in HUD. Is that what you're telling me?

Mr. MARTIN. Not specifically, no. Just a general budget constraint limit.

Senator COBURN. OK. As a financial manager, do you not see a problem with that, that you won't force good decisionmaking unless you have a budget line item which you're addressing up against?

Mr. MARTIN. There's a "general other services" line item which forces them to make decisions within that limited funding for that category of expenses. And that's competing with staff training and contract services as well that are in that object class. But it's not specifically for conferences.

Senator COBURN. OK. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. With respect to technology, I can tell you that we're using technology a great deal within the organization. But the extent of our use with conferences and with grantees, I don't have a feel for that.

I can tell you that with the way we do it internally, there is a—you put people in two categories. The need to go to a conference, or the need to know. And if you have a need to go, then your responsibility is then to disseminate the information among those who have a need to know.

But I think we probably can use technology to a greater extent. But you do have a rather diverse group of grantees, and their ability to connect and to deal with us on that basis will also have some limitations. But I think it's an area that we have to do more on.

With respect to a line item on travel and conferences, we don't have that. I think, from what I can gather, for the first time we have really focused in on the amount of spending on travel and conferences as a result of your request. I think we now have a base, and I think we have everyone's attention with that base, and I think we'll see some improvements just by the mere fact that we have that.

We're installing a new accounting system. As we install that and get that throughout the system, throughout our entire Department, we definitely will have a line item and an ability to capture conferences and travel.

Senator COBURN. Let me just follow up with you before I go to our other two witnesses. Congress recently spent $62.5 million for a high-tech communications center at the CDC, $62.5 million. Has the availability of this communications center had any impact on the number of CDC employees that travel to or the amount spent on conferences at CDC? What's the response to that?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I can tell you, again, from an internal standpoint, we have a lot of meetings with CDC, and they're all through teleconference and video. I don't know the extent beyond that, the extent that it would be used with respect to conferences, other conferences outside. But certainly within, virtually every meeting that I go to that involves all the operating division heads, there is a video connection to CDC in Atlanta.

Senator COBURN. Yes. All right. Mr. Kaplan.

Mr. KAPLAN. Yes, sir. Regarding technology, the State Department has a global reach, of course. And to the extent possible, we are focusing more on trying to use technology more and more.

In some locations, however, technology is just not possible. It's very difficult. I was at a conference last year in Africa where we were trying to use video conferencing to pull people together, and it just didn't work. On the other hand, just a couple of weeks ago, rather than make a trip out to our Asia region to address a gathering there on budget issues, I was able to use video conferencing from back here in Washington, resulting in considerable savings not only in my time but in cost as well.

So we are trying to use this technology more and more. Our bureaus and our embassies who make these decisions on funding for this equipment realize the value of it, and it is increasing.

Regarding the line item, in our budget we do not have a separate line item. But within the limited discretionary funding within our embassies and our bureaus, there's a great deal of sensitivity on conferences and travel, and we're trying to limit it as much as possible and ensure that the right prioritization is taking place.

Senator COBURN. I would note, it's ironic to me that HHS spends two and a half times what the State Department does on conferences and travel. Two and a half times at HHS—we've got to address that imbalance, think about that for a minute.

Mr. Ryan.

Mr. RYAN. Chairman Coburn, as far as the technology, I'm afraid I'm going to sound a lot like the others. We've had video conferencing capability at EPA, if my memory serves me, just for the last couple of years. We use it more and more for internal meetings so that people don't have to come in from San Francisco, and it's very useful.

There are a number of conferences, if you look at our detail. Some of the conferences that we do I think you'd probably want us to continue to do because the citizens want to get a piece of us, frankly.

Senator COBURN. Sure.

Mr. RYAN. They want to see us in person and ask us some hard questions.

I think in other areas—and I was talking to our guys in the research area, where you'd expect people to be high tech—I think that would be a great idea, to use that technology for that. And I would probably be looking into that more. I know we have some problems with bandwidth in some of the labs.

Senator COBURN. We're going to try to fix that by 2009.

Mr. RYAN. I'll be with you.

Line item budget, no, we don't have it. To echo what I think Mr. Johnson said, I learned a lot more about what we do on conferences when you asked the question, frankly. We gather the information because it's decentralized. I looked at it and concluded, I think, some of the things you concluded. And I think we're going to be looking at that much harder.

I think that having a line item per se possibly could produce counter-intuitive results. However, having to report the first bullet on your accountability chart of transparency, I think that goes a long way.

If you simply flush out all these costs by putting a code in the accounting code, making people use it, and then report so that people at a level in the agency can actually see what's going on, I think that goes a long way to help control this. And would probably be more important than an item.

Senator COBURN. Let me ask each of you, do you all have the authority within your organizations to essentially demand e-conferencing or to hold accountable—in other words, to try to force this down the line? Is there any ability that you all have to say, this is how we're going to—other than to say, you're going to have to account. Here's a new number. You're going to have to put it in.

But is there anything that you can do in your positions of authority as the financial managers of these organizations to force this down the line that would cause that, other than a budgeted line item or greater sunshine on it? Anybody want to answer?

Mr. RYAN. Well, I'd start out by saying that to answer your question directly, I don't have the authority—the CFO doesn't have the authority to force it. That's not to mean that we can't—in order to, say, direct it. What we'd have to do is rely on persuasion and a bully pulpit kind of thing, and other tools that you have because you have the leverage of the budget. But I can't direct it at the current time, to answer your question.

Senator COBURN. Any other comments on that?

Mr. KAPLAN. Sure. Personally, the CFO does not have the authority in the State Department, either. But that decision is made at the Under Secretary level. Of course we have a close working relationship, and the Under Secretary is always looking to make the most efficient, budget-wise decisions. So I think there's an influencing and a relationship there that we can work further in this direction.

Senator COBURN. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. I can tell you as we discussed this issue with our operating division heads, and the Secretary was there, he indicated a very large interest in this area, and basically said that he would like to see transparency and he would like to see controls, and gave us basically the authority and the charce to work together to accomplish that. So I think having the Secretary in that camp is pretty good authority.

Senator COBURN. I also would note in one of your comments, we've spent a ton of money wiring universities, colleges, libraries, and schools. And so you have stakeholders out there that we often assume don't have availability for some of this, but they really do. They have it at community centers and other areas throughout the country where we could utilize that.

I want you to look at these two charts because one of the things that is growing is we pay per diems.[1] And as I've talked to Federal employees, the best thing about a trip is you can make cash off of it. And I'm wondering if you have any comments to maybe change this policy to a cost-plus max and have them turn it in.

I know you don't want to deal with the paperwork associated with travel vouchers and all that other. But when you pay somebody $390 a day per diem and they spend $200 or $250, and most

[1] The charts referred to appears in the Appendix on page 29 and 30.

of the conferences they go to have the food there, they're taking home $100 a day.

And the same is true with Members of Congress when they travel. The American public needs to know that. What it ought to be is reasonable and customary expenses ought to be paid for rather than somebody gaming the system. Any comments on that? Think we ought to change that?

It may not apply as much to the State Department because of where they travel, but certainly for the rest of it—and I've traveled once as a Congressman, and I was amazed that I turned in $1,600 back to the Treasury, whereas most people keep it.

Mr. RYAN. Actually, I think that would be a great idea. And I think as the Federal Government goes to electronic travel vouchers, the paperwork burden will be reduced. If what I understand you're saying is simply allow for a cost, and basically everybody goes back to their computer, as they do now, and puts in what they spent, and has the vouchers and beyond that they don't get anything beyond that for reimbursement, I have no problem with that. That sounds like you're paying for the cost of the travel.

Senator COBURN. Right. Any other comments on that?

Mr. KAPLAN. Sir, as you mentioned, the State Department is a little bit different. In many overseas locations where we are, it's often cost-effective to hold a conference rather than fund the air travel to bring people back. So we have a slightly different formula.

Senator COBURN. Right. Yes. I agree with that.

Mr. KAPLAN. But I think the more scrutiny and the more light that is shed on this issue, working closely with GSA who does set the per diem rates, there might be some improvements that could be made in the system.

Senator COBURN. All right. Mr. Ryan, I have one other question for you, and then I have one final question for all of you.

From 2000 to 2004, your conference spending jumped 107 percent, doubled. Last year, though, your agency spent less, actually brought it down several million dollars. The actual amount was—you brought it down $7 million, $6.5 million dollars.

Mr. RYAN. Right.

Senator COBURN. Did it compromise your mission?

Mr. RYAN. No. Not at all. In fact, I have to confess to you, I think some of the difference in the 2 years is probably somewhat artificial by the simple fact that our most expensive conference, which is the Brownfields conference, which is about $3 million a year——

Senator COBURN. Yes.

Mr. RYAN. It's a fall issue. And it just happened to fall within two fiscal years. It was October, one year and September, the other. And that inflated it. And that's why in my oral statement I said, $16 and $19 million.

But to answer your question without answering it exactly the way you asked it, if we were to reduce our conference spending, do I think we would not achieve our goals? No. I think I would echo what the administrator said when he talked about our budget, that we're stewards of the environment as well as stewards of the taxpayer dollar. And we could spend a lot less on conferences and still accomplish what we're doing.

Senator COBURN. OK. One final question for all of you, and then I'll—actually, two final questions. I'll be more straightforward than that.

If you're out on the street, not in the job you're in today, and somebody came up to you and said, the Federal Government over the last 5 years increased their conference spending 70 percent, what would you think about that? That's 13 percent per year. What would you think about that? Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. I think I talk with more people outside government than I talk within government, and I can tell you that they would be horrified. Any business, any large corporation, would say, that's not the way we've had to operate over the last 5 years. And so they would not take kindly to it.

Senator COBURN. Mr. Kaplan? You all, by the way, have not increased it that much, but——

Mr. KAPLAN. I think people would be upset to hear that high percentage of increase, and would logically ask the question, could business be done differently? Could we look at the technology and newer tools and controls, as we ought to be continually looking at how to improve our business practices?

Senator COBURN. Mr. Martin.

Mr. MARTIN. Well, I think I'd want to know why did it go up and what did you get for it. But I know in HUD's case, looking back at 2001 when we were in that lull period between administrations, shortly after the new administration came in, there were a lot of change proposals that needed to be processed. And it was communicating those changes and to do things like reducing improper payments and things that had a benefit.

Senator COBURN. Well, I said 70 percent. HUD went up 340 percent.

Mr. MARTIN. Right.

Senator COBURN. So let's use 340 percent in your case. You don't think they'd question that?

Mr. MARTIN. Absolutely question it. But again, it's relative. And again, going back to the question of why did it go up and what did you get for it, and——

Senator COBURN. OK. Mr. Ryan.

Mr. RYAN. Chairman Coburn, I think to answer your question, I had to think of what I would say to my mother-in-law about this. [Laughter.]

And I would think that I wouldn't want to talk to her very long about because she pretty much would tell me, "I think you boys better get this stuff under control." So I think, again, to echo Mr. Johnson's comment of horrified at the jump, that would be probably where I'd be and where most people would be.

Senator COBURN. One final question, and then I'll introduce Senator Akaka. Welcome.

Senator AKAKA. Good to be here with you.

Senator COBURN. You all have indicated a willingness, or at least a desire, to try to get a handle on this. And I'm extremely thankful to you.

Would you each be willing to work with my office this year to write some parameters? Not specific rules; I don't want the Congress micro-managing you. I want us doing our proper job of over-

sight. But there are things that we can do to limit some of the excesses. And all I would ask is: Would you be willing to work with us to help give you more tools to help control some of these costs better?

[Panelists nod affirmatively.]

Senator COBURN. We're just about to finish up. Senator Akaka, I'm glad you came.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want you to know I look forward to working with you. I enjoy working with you. And I must tell you that as Chairman of this Subcommittee, you have been—maybe this is too strong—that you have focused in dealing——

Senator COBURN. I don't need any help in getting a bad reputation. [Laughter.]

Senator AKAKA [continuing]. With the problems that are in management. And I really commend the Chairman for that.

I regret I was unable to be here earlier, but I was serving as a ranking member of the Armed Services readiness hearing on contracting in Iraq and the problems that we have there. However, I consider this hearing very important, and I appreciate the Chairman's interest in making sure that Federal agencies are spending funds wisely when it comes to sending Federal employees to conferences.

I'm proud to represent the beautiful State of Hawaii, which is one of the Nation's premier conference and convention destinations. We in Hawaii are sometimes frustrated by the assumption that a Federal employee who attends a conference in Honolulu, for example, is wasting taxpayers' dollars.

No Federal employee should be discouraged from participating in a conference as long as there is a legitimate reason to do it. I know our Chairman's focus on government efficiency is sincere, and I want to assure him that my constituents share that value, too.

We cannot forget, however, that Hawaii, our 50th State, is home to nearly 25,000 Federal employees, 16,500 of whom are DOD civilian workers and about 45,000 active duty members of the Armed Services. Hawaii is headquarters for the U.S. Pacific Command, and serves as the operational heart of the world's largest naval command, the Pacific Fleet, whose reach extends all the way to Africa.

PACCOM's operational responsibility covers 105 million square miles, more than 60 percent of the world's population, and $548 billion in U.S. trade. We don't want to unfairly refuse participation in a conference in Hawaii to any Federal employee.

My constituents should not be denied access to the exchange of ideas and expertise of agencies such as HUD or HHS or EPA or State Department. There are unique issues that face the people of Hawaii, but by working with the Federal Government, we can fund solutions. Conferences, conventions, and forums all offer important venues for such critical personnel interactions.

We in Hawaii have long understood the importance of visitors to our State and the State's economic vitality. Given the crucial standing that Hawaii and its capital, Honolulu, hold in this Nation,

once again I strongly urge that the Federal employees neither be denied nor discouraged from attending conventions or conferences in the 50th State.

And that's my statement that I'd like to put in the Record. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Akaka follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Thank you, Chairman Coburn. I consider this hearing very important, and I appreciate your interest in making sure that Federal agencies are spending funds wisely when it comes to sending Federal employees to conferences.

I am proud to represent the beautiful State of Hawaii, which is one of the Nation's premier conference and convention destinations. We in Hawaii are sometimes frustrated by the assumption that a Federal employee who attends a conference in Honolulu—for example—is wasting taxpayer dollars. No Federal employee should be discouraged from participating in a conference as long as there is a legitimate reason to do so. I know our Chairman's focus on government efficiency is sincere, and I want to assure him that my constituents share that value too.

We should never forget that Hawaii, our 50th State, is home to nearly 25,000 Federal employees—16,500 of whom are DOD civilian workers—as well as 45,000 active duty members of the Armed Services. Hawaii is headquarters to the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and serves as the operational heart of the world's largest naval command—the Pacific Fleet—whose reach extends to Africa. PACOM's operational responsibility covers 105 million square miles—more than 60 percent of the world's population and $548 billion in U.S. trade.

We don't want to unfairly refuse participation in a conference in Hawaii to any Federal employee. My constituents should not be denied access to the exchange of ideas and expertise of agencies such as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and State, as well the Environmental Protection Agency. There are unique issues that face the people of Hawaii, but by working with the Federal Government, we can find solutions. Conferences, conventions, and forums all offer important venues for such critical personal interactions.

We in Hawaii have long understood the importance of visitors to our State's economic vitality. Given the crucial standing that Hawaii and its capitol—Honolulu—hold in this Nation, once again I strongly urge that Federal employees neither be denied nor discouraged from attending conventions or conferences in the 50th State.

Senator COBURN. You've been heard, the junior Senator from Hawaii. We have heard you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Senator COBURN. I would note for the record, however, the Defense Department's expenditures on travel and conferences has only risen 8 percent since 2002. They've been pretty good stewards in terms of the increases. And most of the conference that goes on in Hawaii are related to the Department of Defense. So they've been good.

Your statement, however, does not reflect the fact that the HUD had a conference on Sacramento home ownership in Honolulu. The American people are going to ask a question about why do we do that. We're for Honolulu and Hawaii. I want to go there for a conference, too. I've just not been invited yet. And I may not be after one of these hearings. [Laughter.]

Did you have a question for our guests?

Senator AKAKA. Yes. I have one question.

Senator COBURN. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Ryan, you mentioned the use of shared costs for conferences. You also note that if EPA had greater authority to retain and use fees, that more costs could be offset. What authority does EPA need to do this?

Mr. RYAN. This was an idea that if we had authority in law, which we don't have, to charge a fee and retain it to pay for a conference, the marketplace—for certain types of conferences. I'm not talking about a conference that we have with citizens about a Superfund site. No. I'm talking about a conference where we're giving information primarily to people who want to do business with the EPA or get grants.

And we might soon find out—the marketplace might determine whether or not that was valuable information or not because if it wasn't, they wouldn't pay for it. And if they do pay for it, then the American taxpayer is not. And so that was a suggestion. We don't have the authority to do that now.

Senator COBURN. That's a good idea.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COBURN. Once again, let me thank each of you for coming. I know you've got tough jobs. And I appreciate your spending the time. Our grandchildren are worth us doing the right thing every time, and working hard to make sure not one penny is spent in an improper way.

We will ask you for information in May. I hope that from October 1st to May, that you will have that available for us. We'll go back and look at—we're going to look at individual conferencing and the decisions that you're making. We're going to highlight ones that we think the American people might not agree with.

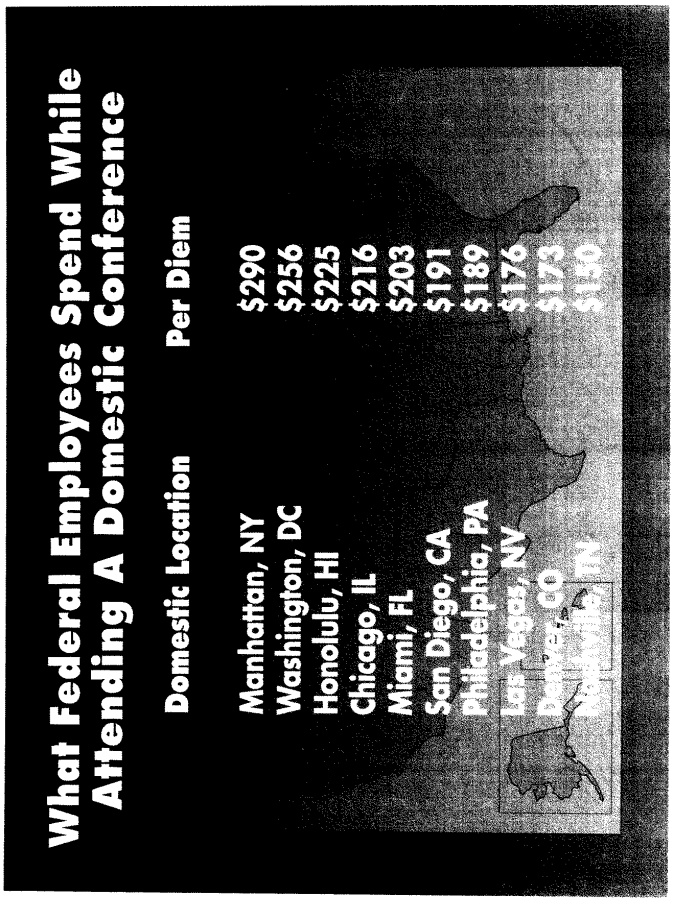
And so I would just ask you to be discerning, and follow up—what I find is if we have a good discussion, we're going to learn about what you are doing more, which means we're going to be better stewards to get you what you need. And the American people can see it.

And transparency and accountability are the things they're going to have to count on. And we've got about 6 years to turn things around before the real crunch hits us. And you all know what I'm talking about. And we need to be serious about doing it.

We thank you for your attendance and your time. The hearing is adjourned.

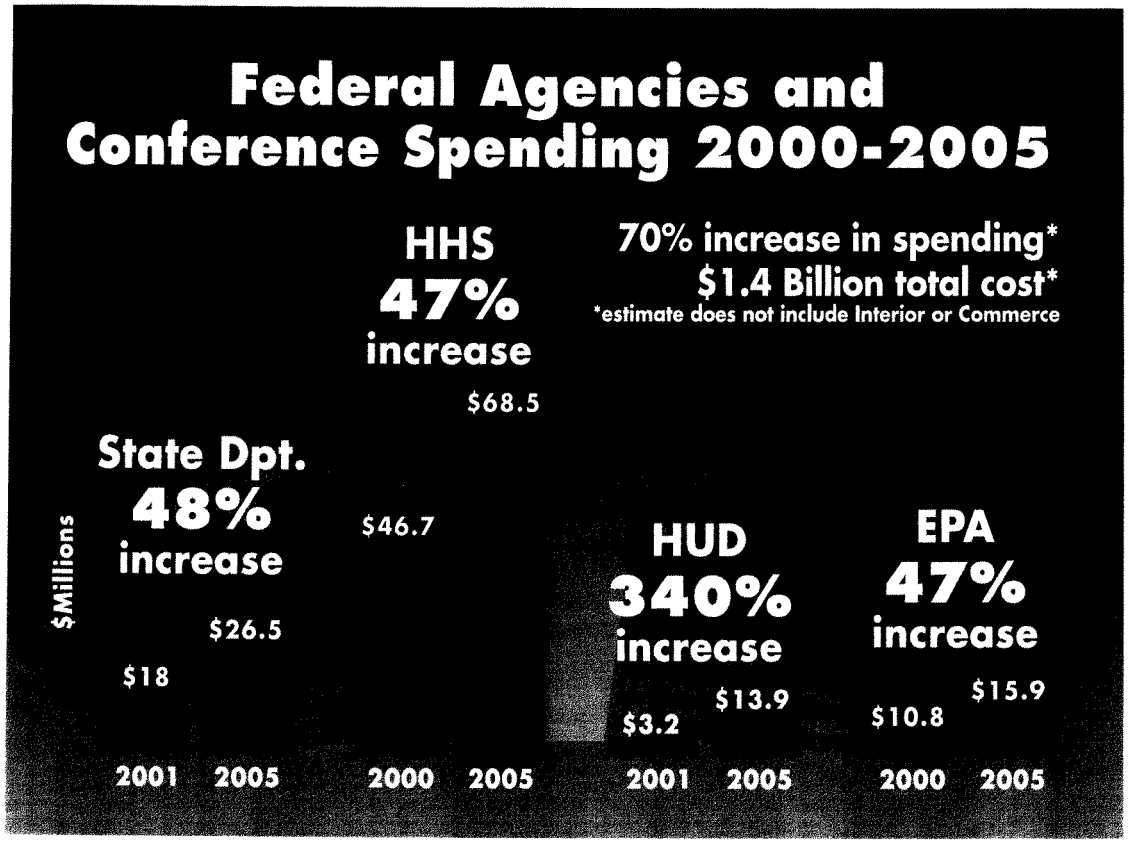
[Whereupon, at 4:26 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX


What Federal Employees Spend While Attending A Domestic Conference
Domestic Location
Per Diem
Manhattan, NY
$290
Washington, DC
$256
Honolulu, HI
$225
Chicago, IL
$216
Miami, FL
$203
San Diego, CA
$191
Philadelphia, PA
$189
Las Vegas, NV
$176
Denver, CO
$173
Nashville, TN
$150

What Federal Employees Spend While Attending A Foreign Conference

Foreign Location	Per Diem
Stockholm, Sweden	$409
London, England	$390
Barcelona, Spain	$367
Geneva, Switzerland	$362
Berlin, Germany	$353
Shanghai, China	$320
Toronto, Canada	$311
Vienna, Austria	$268
Johannesburg, S. Africa	$211
Bangkok, Thailand	$182


Federal Agencies and Conference Spending 2000-2005
70% increase in spending*
$1.4 Billion total cost*
*estimate does not include Interior or Commerce
$Millions
State Dpt.
48%
increase
$18
$26.5
2001
2005
HHS
47%
increase
$46.7
$68.5
2000
2005
HUD
340%
increase
$3.2
$13.9
2001
2005
EPA
47%
increase
$10.8
$15.9
2000
2005

Testimony provided to the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information and International Security

Submitted by Scott H. Evertz
Former Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy

February 7, 2006

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I would like to thank Senator Coburn for convening this important hearing and the members of the Subcommittee for looking into the issue of government-sponsored and paid for travel to conferences and other meetings.

The perspective I bring to this hearing is as a former appointee who was employed for approximately four years, first at the White House and then at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

From April 2001 to July 2002, I served on President Bush's Domestic Policy Council and as Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. In that capacity, I had the honor of working closely with you, Senator Coburn, when you were co-chair of the President's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS (PACHA). Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for your service in that capacity.

From July 2002 to April 2005, I served as Special Assistant to HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson as a special adviser on global HIV/AIDS, with a particular emphasis on supporting his role as Chairman of the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It is in this latter role, at the Department of HHS, that I observed attitudes and behaviors that are most relevant to my testimony at this hearing.

During my tenure at HHS, I witnessed an attitude of entitlement concerning international travel by many bureaucrats and downright arrogance when senior officials attempted to curtail-- or even question-- the travel of some individuals.

It would appear that there was a limitless travel budget and that individuals could pick and choose which international conferences and meetings they would like to attend, always, of course, arguing that public health would be better served by their attending. Conversely, when officials attempted to restrict excessive travel, the argument was made that public health would be adversely affected if the individual whose travel was being scrutinized did not attend a particular conference or meeting.

It is my observation that many such conferences or meetings are a waste of time and money. Consequently, I never participated in the widely-attended International AIDS Conference during my tenure with the Bush Administration. It was during this period that we developed the architecture for both the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

These initiatives are, without a doubt, the two most significant international efforts ever launched to combat these pandemics and were developed outside the setting of the international meeting set, although they were established with close consultation with multinational organizations. The lesson here of course is that travel and face-to-face meetings, which can be costly, are not necessary in today's world with the availability of e-mail, teleconference capabilities and other innovative forms of communication.

The 2002 International AIDS Conference held in Barcelona, Spain is particularly noteworthy because HHS spent $3.6 million to support and sent 236 people, including Secretary Thompson, to attend this event. These amounts do not include participants from other federal departments. The organizers of this conference promote it as "a unique forum for the interaction of science, community and leadership with the goal of bringing knowledge together for changes in the world's response to HIV/AIDS." Yet Secretary Thompson—representing the world's largest contributor to global AIDS efforts—was actually shouted down by other conference attendees and prevented from delivering his remarks. This was hardly a meaningful exchange of ideas or constructive forum for "bringing knowledge together," as claimed by the organizers.

The excesses of the Barcelona conference spurred a review of conference spending by HHS—and much criticism from members of Congress. As a result, the Department decided to "limit" support to the 2004 International AIDS Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand to $500,000 and attendance to 50 HHS employees plus another 80 scientists, researchers, and AIDS workers Other agencies also sent participants. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, sent an additional 74 people to the conference. Even with the U.S. sending more than 200 attendees to this single conference, Administration critics bemoaned the "severe" restrictions being placed on attendance.

Laurie Garrett, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote that "it is intolerable to undermine American support of international health meetings" in the Los Angeles Times on May 30. When the conference concluded, she wrote in the New York Times that "The view from Bangkok 2004 is disheartening, even appalling. What began in 1985 as an annual gathering of scientists, aimed at sharing laboratory findings and information from the battlefronts in the war on H.I.V., has been transformed into a meeting of 17,000 consultants, bureaucrats and activists fighting one another for money to build a huge global AIDS treatment program, employing tens of thousands of people." She noted that "this Bangkok gathering is witnessing the worst science ever presented at an AIDS meeting. Nearly half the scientific presentations expected simply failed to materialize, leaving bare white walls where there were supposed to be thousands of bits of useful data. To be blunt, top H.I.V. laboratory researchers simply don't come to the international gathering anymore, finding it irrelevant."

The cost of the 2004 Conference was nearly $17 million (in U.S. dollars), according to the organizers. This figure does not include a number of independent

expenses incurred by the local host, the Thai Ministry of Public Health, or the actual costs incurred by participants sent by the U.S. or from other nations.

By way of comparison, optimal AIDS combination therapy costs up to $12,000 per patient per year depending on the regimen and payer. For the cost of this single conference, up to 1,500 individuals living with HIV with no access to life saving treatment could have been treated for an entire year.

Or consider that the inexpensive AIDS drug Nevirapine reduces the risk of mother-to-child HIV infection by fifty percent. One dose of Nevirapine is given to the mother and one to the baby. The two doses cost for only $5. Without medication, 25 percent of those children born to mothers with HIV would become infected. About 3.4 million doses of Nevirapine could be purchased for the cost of this conference and approximately 425,000 babies could be saved from becoming infected with an AIDS death sentence at birth.

I am not suggesting that this biannual conference should be discontinued but it is rather eye opening to consider how simple prioritizing of the lavish funding spent on conferences could make a real impact in the lives of those living with HIV and with little access to life saving therapies. Real limits in the total amount spent and the number of attendees at conferences could result in savings that could be used to provide treatment and support to those without currently without access. This is especially important when you consider 95 percent of the 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide currently lack access to anti-retroviral AIDS drugs.

After all, no one has ever died because they could not attend a conference but real people do die when they do not have access to AIDS treatment.

But even without this conference, there would still be plenty of other opportunities for those interested in this disease to meet and exchange ideas. The International AIDS Conference, while it may be the largest, is not the only gathering on HIV/AIDS. In fact, there is an almost never ending meeting circuit. This is a group of individuals that you see one month in Bangkok and the next in Geneva. This time it's Doha. The next it may be Micronesia. No month goes by that there is not an AIDS conference somewhere around the world.

Some deride this never ending "conferencing" as "Spring Break," since many of the conferences are held in scenic vacation settings. Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Miami, Florida are all recent locations for AIDS conferences. The Hawaii conference, I might note, was postponed after some activists complained that it was inappropriate for bureaucrats to be traveling to beautiful Hawaii when thousands of Americans with HIV were on treatment waiting lists. Another conference held in New Orleans in 2003, the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA), was sponsored in part by nine federal agencies and received over $300,000 in federal support. This did not include the costs of sending numerous federal employees.

I believe that decisions concerning attendance by federal employees were often made without the benefit of a review of agendas, topics to be discussed and outcomes to be achieved. This is clearly needed and must be weighed against how the amount that would be spent to attend or support a conference could be otherwise spent on treatment or some other service.

But again, there is an inherent entitlement mentality which exists both among those individuals attending these meetings as well as in the organizational culture surrounding the large numbers of these meetings. In fact, certain meetings have become so sacrosanct that it would be unheard of for certain individuals to decline attending those meetings.

I personally observed this in the field of HIV/AIDS because of my work in the Administration, and quite frankly, I think it is some of those working in the field of HIV/AIDS which may have this jet set "conferencing" lifestyle down to an art. However, it is likely that this same behavior may exist in many other areas and other departments well beyond HHS.

It is the abuse of taxpayer dollars and the fact that HIV/AIDS hits the economically disadvantaged particularly hard that I accepted the invitation to provide this testimony. It is difficult to travel to Africa and see the countless AIDS orphans or infected mothers and children living in poverty who may never have access to treatment and then travel to an exotic conference in Latin America with lavish buffets, lush resorts, beautiful beaches, and well dressed bureaucrats discussing their plight between conference sessions and cocktail receptions.

I mentioned before that I never attended the International AIDS Conference during my tenure in the Administration. That is not to suggest that I, and members of my staff, did not benefit from those conferences and many others. Transcripts of manuscripts presented at such conferences are readily available on line for quick or extensive review based on the value of said manuscripts. Attendance in person at such meetings should be reserved for those who truly need to attend and not those who have simply attended every conference or meeting since such meetings commenced, or - and I ask you to pardon my cynicism - those who "have to be there because they are presenting a poster."

Lest you get the impression, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, that I am ruling out the value of such meetings and conferences outright, let me assure you that I am not. There are plenty of meetings at which important work is done, conversations are had, and valuable insights are gathered from peers and those working "in the field." There does, however, need to be some kind of oversight and crackdown on the abuses, of which many good and well-intentioned individuals at the agencies are aware.

I applaud, for instance, Dr. Bill Steiger, with whom I had the opportunity to work alongside at HHS. Dr. Steiger is Special Assistant to the Secretary for International Affairs and, in that role, basically eliminated business class air travel (which saves

thousands of dollars per ticket) and prohibited tacking on one's personal vacation to a business trip, which provided a perverse incentive for individuals to perceive the need to attend a conference and resulted in the U.S. Government footing the bill for the major part of such a vacation, an international plane ticket. Efforts such as these need to continue and expand. Further, there needs to be ingrained some sense that the government employee is working on a budget and spending the taxpayers dollars when he or she travels.

I conclude with a little anecdote I think quite accurately illustrates what can, at times, be absurd thinking when it comes to the travel I referenced during this testimony. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria holds four Board meetings per year, two in Geneva and two in the developing world. (The last such meeting was held in Morocco which some would not view as "developing," but I digress.) Each delegation of the Board, including the United States, is entitled to send as many as ten individuals. In the interest of full disclosure, I admit that I was a member of that delegation each and every time the meeting was held while I was with the Administration. Every time the interagency team working on Global Fund gathered to determine who would comprise the delegation, we found it quite difficult to narrow down the number of attendees to ten because there were far more individuals who wanted to attend. As a colleague of mine at the time- whose name I will not mention for fear of reprisal- once asked so profoundly, "so, we spend all this money, sending all these people to Global Fund Board meetings to make sure the Global Fund doesn't waste our (U.S. Government's) money."

That's right!

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to present this testimony and applaud you for looking into this issue. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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Statement of Charles Johnson
Assistant Secretary for Budget, Technology and Finance
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Before the
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management,
Government Information, and International Security

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

United States Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 3:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 7, 2006

Introduction

Chairman Coburn and other distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the topic of "Federal Agencies and Conference Spending." My testimony will focus on the nature, extent, and benefits of conference spending at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS or the Department).

HHS is the principal Federal agency responsible for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. HHS' mission is, "To enhance the health and well-being of Americans by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering strong, sustained advances in the sciences, underlying medicine, public health, and social services." Healthy and productive individuals, families, and communities are the very foundation of the Nation's security and prosperity. Encompassing more than 300 grant programs, HHS is the Nation's largest health insurer and the Government's largest grant-making agency. To ensure the best use of these funds, we must have good communication both with and between grantees on goals, best practices, new discoveries, etc. Conferences play a major role in facilitating this communication. For fiscal year (FY) 2005, HHS was accountable for $580 billion in net outlays. HHS strives to achieve its mission while providing appropriate accountability for Federal funds.

I. Purpose

HHS sponsors, co-sponsors, or approves staff to participate in conferences for various mission-related purposes, including:

- Scientific conferences;
- Training conferences for program partners in states and localities;
- Grant application development and promotion of further competition;
- Program development, planning, and information gathering;
- Program outreach and information dissemination; and
- Staff development and training.

HHS' significant and diverse program activities serve millions of Americans and most communities and are delivered through thousands of third-party program administrators, including: units of state and local governments; non-profit organizations; various faith-based and community-based service organizations; colleges and universities; and tribal governments. HHS' role in its program delivery is primarily focused on providing services to the communities, promoting excellent health care, and providing research on health disparities and diseases. The translation of research and dissemination of knowledge are key to promoting the wellness of the American people.

HHS' participation in conferences is a cost-efficient way for the Department to communicate with its many program stakeholders. Participation in conferences could

range from a keynote address from the Secretary to a presentation or technical assistance workshop on a new or substantially revised program requirement by a staff-level employee of the Department.

Some conference participation is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of HHS staff to improve their job performance and support of HHS programs. For some staff positions -- such as accountants, lawyers, contract specialists, or grants specialists -- professional certifications with continuing professional education requirements are required or encouraged. Continuing professional education opportunities are often provided through conferences sponsored by professional associations such as the National Grants Management Association.

II. Actual Expenditures

Last year, in response to Chairman Coburn's request, HHS compiled information on the total amount spent on conference activities in FYs 2000 through 2004 and provided an estimate of the amount expended in FY 2005. We now have updated FY 2005 information from several agencies that previously had provided projections. This updated information shows that Department-wide spending on conferences, though up about a third from FY 2000, has been relatively constant since FY 2003, and actually decreased in FY 2005 from the previous fiscal year.

Conference spending increased for both the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF); however, these are exceptions. It is important to be aware that the increase since FY 2000 has been concentrated in two agencies that have received expanded missions.

Completing the doubling of the NIH research funding was a top priority of the President, and that was accomplished in FY 2003. As a result, FY 2005 funding for NIH was 62 percent higher than in FY 2000. One would expect, therefore, an increase in spending on efforts to assure that the results of ongoing and completed research are disseminated widely.

NIH scientific conference expenditures increased from $12.3M in FY 2000 to $24.9M in FY 2005. Well over half of the NIH expenditures on conferences are in the form of conference grants to universities and other research institutions. The applicants are responsible for planning, directing, and executing the proposed conferences. These grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

ACF has been charged with implementing several of this Administration's key initiatives. New programs include Compassion Capital Fund, Independent Living, Education and Training Vouchers, Mentoring Children of Prisoners, and Abstinence Education. High priority initiatives include Healthy Marriage and the Good Start/Grow Smart initiative in the Head Start program. As a result of ACF's efforts to assure successful implementation, its conference spending increased from $6.2M in FY 2000 to $10.8M in FY 2005.

Conference spending for all other HHS agencies decreased by 6 percent from FY 2000 to FY 2005. This decline occurred at the same time that total HHS expenditures rose by nearly $200 billion from FY 2000 through FY 2005. While the total HHS budget rose over 50 percent, total conference spending rose only 33 percent in the same period. I believe this comparison is a sign of the Department's careful stewardship of resources and increasing oversight of conference spending during this time of significant program growth. Having said that, however, I agree that additional oversight can further improve our stewardship.

III. Internal Controls

Endorsements/Disclaimers

HHS is very concerned about maintaining strict controls over conferences. To that end, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (ASAM), I have issued a memorandum to all HHS Operating Division (OPDIV) Heads that strengthened the Department's current policy on the sponsorship of conferences. The memorandum emphasizes the importance of fiscal stewardship and ensuring alignment with the HHS mission in considering all conference spending. The memorandum also articulates the requirements for HHS approval of sponsored conferences; the requirement of the use of disclaimer language on all conference materials; and the use/non-use of the HHS and OPDIV Logos on conference agendas, materials, publications, and websites. In addition, it makes clear that although recipients of HHS funds are required to show that

HHS is a funding source for a conference, that in itself does not translate into HHS endorsement of the conference.

In the case of NIH conference grants, applicants must apply for this support, and applications are reviewed in accordance with the NIH two-level peer review process.

Travel

Further, in 2003 the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (ASAM) and the Director of the Office of Global Health Affairs (OGHA) established processes for reviewing and monitoring domestic and foreign travel, including travel to conferences. In addition to reviews, the HHS Program Support Center (PSC) Division of Financial Operations (DFO) performs a 100 percent pre-payment audit of the travel of non-career, confidential or policymaking appointees and those in Senior Executive Service positions. For the remainder of the travelers from the Department, DFO performs random pre-payment audits on manual vouchers and random post-payment audits on manual and automated vouchers.

For domestic travel, the HHS review process requires that requests for domestic travel for Operating Division Heads, for groups of 20 or more employees, and for trips whose costs exceed $2500 for one individual be submitted to ASAM for review. For foreign travel, all travel requests are to be submitted to OGHA for review through the Notification of Foreign Travel, or NFT, system. Requests must include information such as destination, justification for trip, cost, and funding source.

HHS will continue to exercise strict internal controls over conferences to maintain adherence to tight budgeting guidelines.

IV. Conference Participation

The increases in HHS' conference spending over the past five years have been largely due to a greater focus on promoting the Department's strategic goals. This focus includes: increasing program participation by faith-based and community organizations; dissemination and translation of research knowledge; and reducing improper grantee spending. In each of the following examples, we believe that HHS' program outreach through conference participation is a contributing factor to improved performance results.

Participation by Faith-Based and Community Organizations

HHS continues its successful efforts to increase participation by faith-based and community organizations. The cost of ACF conferences for the Community Services Programs increased from $400,000 in FY 2000 to $1.3 million in FY 2005 – 6 percent of the overall HHS increase. An important portion of this increase was a result of efforts to support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, whose goal was to assist faith-based/grass-roots organizations to compete for Federal grants.

Head Start and Child Care Programs

The Head Start and Child Care portions of total conference spending increased from $3.3M in FY 2000 to $5.1M in FY 2004 – 39 percent of ACF's total increase. In April 2002, the President announced his Good Start/Grow Smart initiative, which established priorities that spanned several Federal agencies, including partnering with States to improve early childhood education, strengthening Head Start, and providing information to teachers, caregivers, and parents. This effort was designed to assure that every Head Start teacher had the training and skills necessary to provide Head Start children the early literacy, language, and numeracy skills they will need to be successful in school. Intensive training of Head Start teachers began in the summer of 2002 and continued through FY 2005. Related to this initiative in FY 2004 were increased efforts to ensure that Head Start programs were achieving their primary purpose of promoting school readiness – that all children leave Head Start with the cognitive, emotional, and social skills they will need to be successful in school. In addition, ACF continued efforts that were initiated in FY 2002 to develop a process to help Head Start programs determine the degree to which each child is benefiting from their time in Head Start. Increased conference spending from FY 2002 to FY 2005 was provided to ensure implementation of these important technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives.

Gordon Research Conferences

Participation in the Gordon Research Conferences by NIH intramural scientists is another aspect of conference spending. Attendance at these conferences is by invitation. The Gordon conferences provide an international forum for the presentation and discussion of

current research information in the biological, chemical, and physical sciences, and their related technologies. Each conference provides a forum for the synthesis, evaluation, dissemination, and translation of research knowledge. In addition, European and Japanese scientists, who lend a different perspective to ongoing research, attend these conferences. The impact of these conferences on the progress of American science has been very high.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Young Minority Conferences

These two conferences are part of the annual meeting of the American Association of Cancer Researchers (AACR). This annual meeting is an indispensable conference for cancer researchers working in all sub-disciplines of the cancer field. More than 15,000 participants from 60 countries gather to discuss over 6,000 abstracts and to hear more than 250 presentations on new and significant discoveries in basic, clinical, and translational cancer research. Scientific award lectures, grant writing workshops, networking events, educational sessions, and exhibits round out this comprehensive program. Scientists gain important networking opportunities and exposure to the highest state-of-the-art science.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, HHS is very committed to maintaining proper stewardship of Federal funds. As evidenced by our most recent clean audit opinion, the seventh in a row, HHS' commitment to strong and transparent financial management is clear. We are continuously monitoring our internal controls and strengthening our Departmental policies. Thank you again for the opportunity to share HHS' conference spending information. This concludes my testimony and I stand ready to answer any questions the Committee may have on this topic.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST: - DHHS CONFERENCE SPENDING

(in dollars)

CONFERENCE SUPPORT EXPENDITURES/PROJECTIONS BY OPDIV/STAFFDIV

	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
FDA.....	$3,213,923	$3,221,567	$3,563,661	$4,021,665	$3,918,565	$3,715,64
HRSA.....	1,921,763	1,142,431	996,968	814,258	1,797,997	1,139,75
IHS.....	1,002,677	985,048	998,398	970,170	1,170,928	1,231,59
CDC.....	8,558,382	6,982,795	7,642,681	6,926,825	7,056,486	7,577,47
NIH.....	12,360,000	16,323,000	15,867,000	19,259,000	20,352,000	24,900,00
SAMHSA.....	4,905,696	3,323,705	3,833,139	3,956,090	4,812,323	3,313,04
AHRQ.....	4,900,000	7,500,000	6,800,000	7,500,000	4,300,000	5,100,00
CMS.....	1,490,446	1,859,697	1,148,546	1,187,960	1,210,474	1,246,78
ACF.....	6,178,987	8,986,589	13,308,943	13,996,575	15,861,557	10,842,98
AoA.....	14,640	16,679	12,190	23,539	22,797	40,00
OS/OPHS....	1,796,337	1,740,103	1,918,654	2,350,275	2,326,160	2,531,14
OS/OTHER.	343,169	126,645	401,718	714,197	734,987	496,38
TOTAL, HHS	**$46,686,020**	**$52,208,259**	**$56,491,898**	**$61,720,554**	**$63,564,274**	**$62,134,79**

IHS: Revised FY 2005 total reflects actual spending for the fiscal year.

NIH: This reflects the revised 2005 estimate that was provided to Senator Coburn in October, 2005.

ACF: Revised FY 2005 total reflects final actual spending for the fiscal year.

OS: Office of the Secretary Conference spending was inadvertently omitted from the Summary Table.

Federal Agencies and Conference Spending

Sid Kaplan,

Testimony before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security

February 7, 2006

Chairman Coburn and distinguished members of this Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. As you well know, the conduct of diplomacy frequently requires face to face interactions, venues for the exchange of ideas, and meetings that foster personal relationships which are critical to the success of our mission. Conferences are an integral means by which the Department of State conducts our nation's international affairs.

The Department conducts diplomatic relations with 188 countries through over 260 posts around the world, and participation in conferences is an effective means to promote advancement of issues across a wide array of operational and policy areas. For some international organizations, conferences are the primary means by which business is conducted. The U.S. also advances and protects hemispheric interests through participation

in the meetings of the Organization of American States (OAS) and related organizations. The U.S. realizes similar goals reflecting key regional relationships through participation in meetings of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations regional commissions, and other signatories to major treaties.

Active State Department participation in international conferences ensures that the United States maintains our influence, and promotes and protects key U.S. interests in the formulation of policy, the management of the Department's operations, and the deliberations of multilateral international organizations in which the U.S. has membership.

The Department's participation in conferences is often essential to achieving a desired outcome, and cost of attendance is justified by what was or was not accomplished due to U.S. engagement. For example, failure to attend a conference that results in action not supported by our policies could require a greater expenditure of resources to address the action in retrospect than it would have cost to participate in the conference.

The Department has taken steps to institute controls over conference participation and to stem the increase in conference costs. The Department is also continuously exploring and making use of ways to leverage technology and resources so that the Department's participation in meaningful conferences is facilitated in the most cost effective way possible.

The funding used to support conferences is managed within each of the Department's bureaus. Therefore bureaus and, consequently, U.S. Missions overseas, must prioritize spending for conferences against other competing requirements.

In 2004, the State Department instituted a policy requiring advance approval from the office of the Under Secretary for Management in order to attend or host conferences. Under the policy, requests to host or attend conferences, workshops, or other meetings to which travel is required and where twenty-five or more Department personnel will participate, must be submitted 120 days in advance. The request must be justified by demonstrating:

- The benefit to the Department;
- The outcome or results expected;

- Security risks;
- Cost; and
- How the conference advances the Department's strategic priorities.

The Department is also using technology to increase efficiency and cut conference costs. The use of Digital Video Conferencing (DVC) is on the rise. As an example, rather than attending regional management or budget conferences, I, and in most cases a small panel of colleagues, have frequently opted to deliver our presentations using DVC. Also, while not conferences per se, the Bureau of Resource Management regularly uses DVCs to conduct Mission Performance Plan reviews with embassy teams, substantially reducing international travel and costs. In short, as DVC technology has improved, this practice is becoming more prevalent, and I expect it to only grow in the future, which will contribute to greater cost effectiveness.

The conference spending data reported covers a five year period. The report includes information on conferences with a variety of purposes including policy issues related to Afghanistan, Iraq, the Global War On Terror and the fight against AIDS, as well as management and professional development

conferences. Most recently, conference spending has decreased from $30.9M in FY2004 to $26.5M in FY2005, primarily due to non-recurring conferences such as the hosting of the OAS General Assembly and the increased use of technology.

As the Acting Chief Financial Officer, I can assure you that the Department will continue to avoid unnecessary conference expenditures, and, where appropriate, to vigorously pursue more cost effective methods of participating.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Committee, and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Statement of James M. Martin
Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Before the
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management,
Government Information and International Security

Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs

United States Senate

February 7, 2006

Chairman Coburn and other distinguished Members of the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the topic of "Federal Agencies and Conference Spending." My testimony will focus on the nature, extent and benefits of conference spending at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). With ever increasing funding needs and competition for federal resources, it is important that every federal dollar be properly spent with a clear mission related purpose and benefit.

Nature and Extent of HUD's Conference Spending

HUD sponsors, co-sponsors, or approves staff to participate in conferences for various mission-related purposes, including:

- Program development, planning and information gathering;
- Program outreach and information dissemination; and
- Staff development and training.

HUD's significant and diverse program activities serve millions of American households and most communities, and are delivered through thousands of third party program administrators, including: units of state and local government; public housing agencies; private mortgage lenders; non-profit and for-profit housing sponsors, developers and managers; and various faith-based and other community-based service organizations. HUD's role in its program delivery is primarily focused on providing program support, monitoring and enforcement to better assure program funds are used for their intended purpose and benefit. Effective communication of program goals and requirements to program beneficiaries and third party program administrators is a critical component of HUD's program control environment.

The Government Accountability Office's (GAO) *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, (GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1, November 1999) provide the overall framework for establishing and maintaining adequate systems of internal control and for identifying and addressing major performance and management challenges and areas at greatest risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. GAO's standards stipulate that:

> *"For an entity to run and control its operations, it must have relevant, reliable, and timely communications relating to internal as well as external events. ...In addition to internal communications, management should ensure there are adequate means of communicating with, and obtaining information from, external stakeholders that may have a significant impact on the agency achieving its goals."*

Most of HUD's third party program administrators and program beneficiaries are represented by national and/or local associations or interest groups. HUD's participation in conferences sponsored by or for these associations or interest groups is a cost-efficient way for the Department to communicate with its many program stakeholders. HUD's participation in these types of conferences could range from a keynote speech from the Secretary or Program Assistant Secretary to a separate presentation or workshop on a new

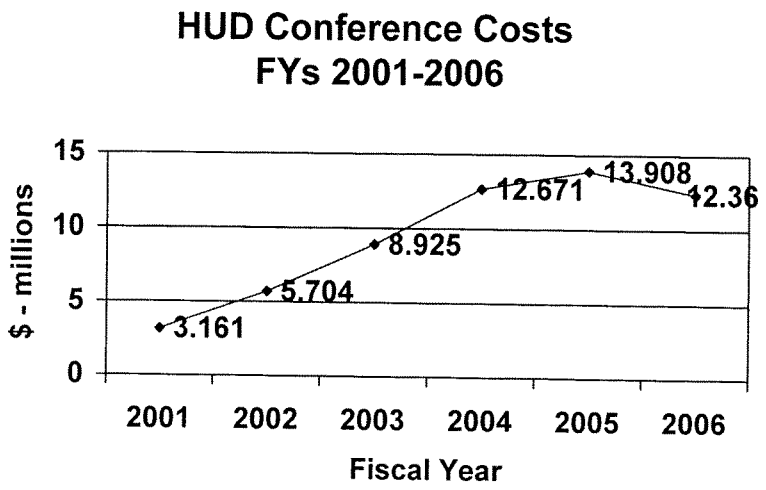
or substantially revised program, requirement, or system. HUD also directly sponsors or co-sponsors conferences to focus on HUD-specific program issues.

Another factor in an effective system of internal control is management's commitment to competence. According to GAO's standards:

> *"All personnel need to possess and maintain a level of competence that allows them to accomplish their assigned duties, as well as understand the importance of developing and implementing good internal control. Management needs to identify appropriate knowledge and skills needed for various jobs and provide needed training..."*

Some conference participation is to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of HUD staff to improve their job performance and support of HUD programs. For some staff positions -- such as accountants, actuaries, engineers or lawyers -- professional certifications with continuing professional education requirements are required or encouraged. Continuing professional education opportunities are often provided through conferences sponsored by professional associations.

In response to Chairman Coburn's request, HUD compiled information on the total amount spent on conference activities in fiscal years 2001 through 2005, and provided an estimate of the amount expected to be spent in fiscal year 2006. The following graph summarizes the annual conference cost information for fiscal years 2001 through 2006, and a more detailed cost breakout is provided in the enclosed chart.



Chairman Coburn also requested a full listing of conferences that received support from HUD in the most recent fiscal year, 2005. HUD's queries indicate it spent $13.908 million to sponsor, co-sponsor or participate in 989 conferences in fiscal year 2005.

In analyzing the spending trend over the past five years, fiscal year 2001 was an uncharacteristically low period for conference spending, due to the changeover in administrations and leadership that occurred during that period. The increases between fiscal years 2002 and 2005 were largely due to outreach efforts on a number of major program change proposals – such as proposed reforms of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) requirements, the proposed conversion of HUD's funding of public housing to a project-based management structure, and the conversion of the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program from a unit-based to a dollar-based funding process. In some cases, Congress has mandated that HUD pursue negotiated rulemaking with its program stakeholders, which requires increased spending on conference-type activity.

Internal Controls over Conference Spending

As a general condition of HUD's conference participation, the subject matter or purpose of the conference must pertain to HUD's program mission and related strategic and annual plan goals, or to the requirements of a HUD employee's position description. HUD's mission is to *"increase homeownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination"* and its six strategic goals are to:

- Increase homeownership opportunities;
- Promote decent affordable housing;
- Strengthen communities;
- Ensure equal opportunity in housing;
- Embrace high standards of ethics, management and accountability; and
- Promote participation of faith-based and community organizations.

The list of 989 conferences supported by HUD in fiscal year 2005 conform with HUD's mission and goals.

Although there is no specified limit on how much HUD can spend on conference support or participation, spending is limited by HUD's normal budget constraints. With the exception of certain program technical assistance funding sources, HUD's participation in conferences must be funded from its Salaries and Expense (S&E) Fund. While HUD was appropriated $1.1 billion in S&E funds in fiscal year 2005, 92 percent of that funding is for fixed-type expenses, including staff salaries, benefits, facilities and telecommunications expense, leaving only 8 percent or around $83 million for discretionary-type expenses such as contracted advisory and assistance services, travel, training, and conference participation. Since most of HUD's contracted services support mandatory requirements and significant travel is required to support an adequate level of program monitoring, little funding is actually available for training and conference participation. As shown in the above chart, estimated conference spending over the past five years ranged from a low of $3.2 million in fiscal year 2001 to a high of $13.9 million in fiscal year 2005. The

$13.9 million spent on conferences in fiscal year 2005 represented a very small percentage of HUD's total enacted budget of $33.7 billion that year.

Nearly $4.4 million or 31 percent of HUD's total fiscal year 2005 conference spending was from public housing technical assistance program funds that were appropriated for such purposes. HUD must submit an annual technical assistance spending plan for Congressional approval before technical assistance funds can be used. The use of public housing program technical assistance funds for conference type activities has risen in recent years given the need to communicate significant changes in the programs that public housing agencies administer for HUD. The remaining $9.5 million of fiscal year 2005 conference spending was funded out of HUD's S&E Fund.

Supervisory approval of conference participation is required, and is contingent on the availability of funding. This approval is normally requested and provided on Standard Form No. 182, *"Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training."* Any required travel expense associated with conference participation is also separately requested and approved in the HUD Travel Management System. Any other expenses associated with HUD's sponsorship, co-sponsorship or participation in a conference - such as conference facilities or equipment rental, materials development and printing costs, etc. – are processed through HUD's normal acquisition approval processes. In some cases, logistical arrangements for HUD sponsored conferences are made by contracted service providers, rather than HUD staff, and costs are covered as part of the cost of the contract.

HUD has a special policy on the approval of any co-sponsored conferences with non-Federal entities to better assure the relationship is appropriate. Proposed co-sponsorships require the review and concurrence of the HUD Office of General Counsel before they can proceed.

HUD does not currently maintain an activity-based cost accounting system and cannot readily separate and report on the full cost of conference type activities without the use of ad hoc systems queries and manual analysis. Most conference type expenses are charged to one or more relevant budget object class codes, such as: 2100 for Travel; 2300 for Rent Communication & Utilities; 2400 for Printing & Reproduction; or 2500 for Other Services, which include service contracting and training activity. In responding to Chairman Coburn's request for conference spending information for fiscal years 2001 through 2005, HUD queried its financial system to separate activity in these object classes and manually analyzed the information to separate the conference-related expense activity requested and provided in the enclosed chart.

Demonstrated Benefits of Conference Activities

Increases in HUD's conference spending over the past five years have been largely due to a greater focus on promoting the Department's strategic goals and pursuing program changes to increase performance results. Examples include HUD's efforts to increase homeownership, promote program participation by faith-based and community organizations, and reduce improper rental housing assistance payments through improved

program guidance and tools for correctly determining subsidy levels. In each of these examples, it is believed that HUD's program outreach through conference participation is a contributing factor to the increasing performance results, as follows:

Homeownership Rates

HUD's core housing programs continue to contribute to increases in the overall national homeownership rate. Despite achieving the highest overall homeownership rates in history, minorities remain less likely than non-Hispanic whites to own their homes. To confront this gap, President Bush challenged the nation to create 5.5 million minority homeowners by the end of this decade. Since the President issued his challenge, nearly 2.5 million minority families have joined the ranks of homeowners and the Nation is on pace to meet the President's goal. The promotion and use of HUD programs such as FHA Mortgage Insurance, Housing Counseling, HOME and the American Dream Downpayment Initiative help make the dream of homeownership a reality for many Americans.

National Homeownership Rate Trend

Fiscal Year	2002	2003	2004	2005
Overall Rate	68.0	68.4	69.0	68.8
Minority Rate	48.9	49.3	50.9	51.2

Reduction of Improper Rental Housing Assistance Payments

HUD reduced its gross annual improper rental housing assistance payments by 50 percent since 2000. In 2003, improper payments were reduced to $1.6 billion from the 2000 level of $3.2 billion. In 2004, improper payments were further reduced to $1.2 billion, a 61 percent reduction from 2000. HUD's roll-out of improved computer matching techniques for program administrators to verify tenants' income is an important contributing factor to reducing improper payments. HUD was the first Federal agency to achieve a green score on the President's Management Agenda initiative on Eliminating Improper Payments.

Improper Rental Housing Assistance Payment Trend

Fiscal Year	2000 (Base)	2003	2004
Gross Amount	$3.2B	$1.6B	$1.2B

Participation by Faith-based and Community Organizations

HUD continues its successful efforts to eliminate unnecessary barriers and increase participation by faith-based and community organizations. Due to a variety of HUD outreach efforts, more organizations are impacting the lives of society's most vulnerable citizens. From FY 2002 to FY 2004, the number of HUD grants to faith-based organizations increased by 28 percent.

Conclusion:

Mr. Chairman, I hope that I have been able to shed some light on the controlled nature of HUD's participation in conference activities and the benefits derived from those activities. That concludes my testimony and I stand ready to answer any questions the Committee may have on this topic.

HUD SPONSORED & PAID CONFERENCES

Dollars in Millions

CATEGORIES	Estimate 2006	2005	ACTUAL 2004	2003	2002	2001
Salaries & Overtime (1100)	$6,360,929	$6,855,877	$6,329,342	$5,517,003	$1,892,353	$837,878
Travel (2100)	1,465,925	829,800	1,082,860	849,493	707,924	371,972
Rent & Communication (2300)	23,930	12,819	27,007	4,340	107	4,073
Printing (2400)	177,250	58,577	164,466	36,320	45,040	13,464
Contractual Services (2500)	2,092,211	1,786,362	2,361,454	2,223,791	1,852,935	198,213
Office Supplies (2600)	34,479	3,430	65,712	1,528	3,818	826
Equipment (3100)	5,000	3,750	3,300	0	0	4,045
S & E Totals	$10,159,724	$9,550,615	$10,034,141	$8,632,475	$4,502,177	$1,430,471
Program Funds	2,200,286	4,357,678	2,636,826	292,077	1,201,532	1,730,274
Total	**$12,360,010**	**$13,908,293**	**$12,670,967**	**$8,924,552**	**$5,703,709**	**$3,160,745**

Testimony of Michael W. S. Ryan
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security

Tuesday, February 7, 2006

Chairman Coburn, on behalf of the Administrator, I would like to thank you and the Members of the Subcommittee on Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security for the opportunity to testify today on the subject of "Federal Agencies and Conference Spending."

EPA appreciates your interest in this topic. We share your concern for the efficient, effective, and appropriate use of taxpayer dollars, whether for conferences or for any other purpose.

Like all our on-the-job activities, conferences must promote EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment. This is EPA's overall policy, and it relates to conferences organized by EPA as well as those organized by external entities.

We carry out this mission through the work of some 17,500 employees, located in Washington, D.C., 10 major regional offices, and laboratories and other facilities across the country.

Our work is organized in terms of five long-term, strategic goals which the Agency has developed with the advice and participation of our governmental partners and stakeholders.

These goals shape the way we plan, budget, and account for our work. They are:

GOAL 1 Clean Air and Global Climate Change
GOAL 2 Clean and Safe Water
GOAL 3 Land Preservation and Restoration

GOAL 4 Healthy Communities and Ecosystems
GOAL 5 Compliance and Environmental Stewardship

We organize our budget in terms of results and annual goals that relate to these strategic goals, consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act and with the Administration's emphasis on results-based government.

We also account for spending by these goals, with reference to specific programs and projects that may or may not involve conferences. In this way, we aim to account for spending in terms of the results of our work, rather than just the work activities themselves.

Our cost accounting system follows the structure of our strategic and annual goals. For this reason it can be difficult to produce a spreadsheet detailing conference spending across all Agency offices and programs. Instead, we have to do further analysis to produce the kind of information you have requested and identify trends in spending.

In response to your request last summer, we identified a trend in conference spending, from about $10 million in 2002, to about $15 million in 2003, to more than $22 million in 2004. At that time, we estimated this trend would drop off to about $16 million in 2005.

We recognize the importance of internal controls and ethical standards to sound decisions on conference participation.

We support participation in conferences that enable EPA employees to do a better job in supporting one or more of the Agency's goals. These could include training conferences organized by EPA as well as those sponsored by professional associations. These often involve continuing professional education programs to maintain important certifications for staff in different technical skills.

In addition, EPA has broad authority under several statutes to conduct formal conferences to deliver useful environmental information to the public and to other Federal agencies. These statutes include the Clean Air Act; Clean Water Act; Solid Waste Disposal Act; National Environmental Policy Act; the Superfund and Brownfields statutes; and the Government Employees Training Act.

A number of EPA programs rely on close coordination with community groups, intergovernmental organizations, and members of the regulated community. EPA generally supports conferences that bring together different constituencies to promote collaboration and partnerships for the Nation's environmental programs.

Many EPA conferences are designed to inform a non-Federal audience about important developments in environmental policy and promote technology transfer, cooperation between stakeholders with different perspectives, voluntary actions, and other non-regulatory approaches to protecting the environment and public health. Agency employees often comprise less than 50 percent of the audience in these conferences.

Decisions on conference attendance and support are not made centrally for the Agency. Generally, these decisions are made at the appropriate management level within individual program and regional offices. For example, Assistant Administrators or Regional Administrators may make decisions on whether to hold conferences on mission-related topics. Individuals' attendance must be approved by their supervisors.

For conferences determined to be appropriate to EPA's mission, several Agency offices provide advice and guidance on ethical and administrative matters governing participation.

For example, the Ethics Program in EPA's Office of General Counsel makes available a "Best Practices Guide for Conferences" as well as other guidance to address issues relating to conferences. These materials are part of an online resource library accessible by all EPA employees. Included here is an ethics advisory on Jointly Sponsored Conferences. This advisory is significant as it describes circumstances that allow for EPA to share costs of conferences with non profits, states, and others who co-sponsor conferences with the Agency.

Another avenue to share the burden of the costs of conferences is to collect and use fees to offset conference costs. However, the authority to collect and use fees is very limited. If EPA had greater authority to "retain and use" fees, we could offset more of the costs of conferences through "user fees" that would reduce the Federal government's expenditures.

My office, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, is also involved in conference guidance to the extent that we implement GSA's travel regulations and are guided by Comptroller General decisions. We provide an explanation of the subset of travel regulations that pertains to conference attendance. We also assist in cost comparisons and make recommendations about the most cost-effective venues and logistics for conferences sponsored by EPA.

In closing, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, as you know, we announced yesterday the President's Budget request for EPA for Fiscal Year 2007, in the amount of about $7.3 billion.

Overall, the President's Budget reflects his commitment to providing critical resources for our Nation's highest priorities: fighting the War on Terror; strengthening our homeland defenses; and sustaining the momentum of our economic recovery. The President expects us to exercise fiscal discipline by focusing on priorities and targeting resources accordingly.

For EPA, this means focusing Agency efforts to accelerate the pace of environmental protection, while maintaining the country's economic competitiveness.

In the current budget climate, it is incumbent on all of us to take a hard look at spending to identify areas for greater efficiencies and reduced costs, while producing meaningful results.

Congress has recognized the importance of conferences by creating laws that encourage their use to promote effective communications and information-sharing among the many groups that make up the American community.

At the same time, we also need to be careful stewards to ensure that costs for conferences are appropriate.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to examine how we manage conference spending and make sure that we are using these resources for the greatest benefit.

We appreciate your interest and your support for EPA's work. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Summary of EPA Conference Costs
(dollars in thousands)

Fiscal Year	Travel & Related Costs	Staff Salaries	Contracts & Grants	Other	Total
2000	$1,401.6	$3,234.2	$5,497.4	$648.3	$10,781.5
2001	$1,156.7	$2,882.8	$6,030.6	$638.1	$10,708.2
2002	$1,172.1	$3,194.2	$7,168.2	$664.1	$12,198.6
2003	$1,632.7	$3,908.2	$8,229.1	$930.5	$14,700.5
2004	$2,719.9	$4,120.4	$15,316.3	$210.7	$22,367.3
2005*	$2,288.5	$4,194.7	$9,081.8	$310.9	$15,875.9

* 2005 costs were projected as of August 2005.

April 7, 2006

HHS Responses to Chairman Coburn's Questions for the Record following February 6, 2006, Hearing on Conference Spending

From: ***Charles E. Johnson, Assistant Secretary for Budget, Technology and Finance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services***

Question 1: In your testimony you state that total conference spending at HHS increased 33 percent since 2000, yet the numbers you provided the Subcommittee equal a 47 percent increase. Why the discrepancy?

Answer: The October 4, 2005, report on total conference spending that HHS provided was based on actual cost data for fiscal years (FY) 2000-2004 and projected costs for FY 2005 before the fiscal year ended. Testimony before the Subcommittee on February 7, 2006, reflected actual FY 2005 cost data. As it turns out, the National Institutes of Health and the Administration for Children and Families had significantly overestimated conference spending. As a result, the 33 percent figure more accurately describes the increase in HHS conference spending between FY 2000 and FY 2005.

Question 2: Your testimony states that while the total HHS budget rose 50 percent, conference spending didn't rise at the same rate (47 percent according to the numbers provided but 33 percent according to HHS testimony). You credit this to careful stewardship and increased oversight of conference spending. Under this system, how is it that you sent money and employees to support a conference in Salt Lake City last August that had the intent of decriminalization of drugs and featured topics including, "We Don't Need a 'War' on Methamphetamine" and "You Don't Have to Be Clean & Sober. Or Even Want to Be!"

a) The lowest estimate of the federal tax dollars spent at this conference is $20,000, not including salaries for the federal employees who attended. Obviously the themes of this conference conflict with the Administration's policies and the sensibilities of Americans. Where was the breakdown in the vetting process that allowed these funds to be used?

b) Was anyone punished for sending money to this conference or using the HHS logo on the conference materials, or was the only course of action, a letter sent by the Secretary?

Answer: A portion of CDC's cooperative agreement with Utah was used to support the conference. While Utah informed a CDC project officer that Utah and the Harm

Reduction Coalition were sponsoring the conference and shared a draft agenda with the project officer, Utah did not inform the project officer that CDC monies were being used for conference support, and the CDC project officer did not inquire about the particular source of funding for the conference. When CDC funds are used for conference support, CDC grantees are required to seek CDC's approval of conference agendas. See AR-20 at http://www.cdc.gov/od/pgo/funding/ARs.htm.

In light of this, CDC responded to the issues raised by the situation by: (1) sending a letter on September 2, 2005, to all state health directors reinforcing the policies and procedures concerning the use of HIV funds for conferences; and (2) specifically addressing this issue at the September 22nd National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors Annual Executive Committee Meeting so that state AIDS officials can reinforce the procedures and policies concerning using HIV federal funds to support conferences.

Question 3: I understand that a special conference guidance was sent to senior managers at HHS on Friday, February 3, 2006. In this guidance, you make a strong point about the difference between HHS providing funding support for a conference and sponsorship, particularly with the use of HHS logos. Unfortunately, the distinction is lost on me. If a conference is worthy enough for HHS to underwrite, why would it not be worthy of HHS sponsorship, including use of the HHS logo?

a) Why is the Department providing funding to a conference for which it would not be willing to be listed as a sponsor? I also note that you require certain disclaimers on materials for conferences that HHS supports stating that the views expressed in the conference do not represent agency views.

b) Why would you support a conference that you could not endorse?

Answer: There are various types of conference support, many of which involve information and exchange for the purposes of exploration/clarification for a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge, and others that may be limited to supporting certain aspects of a conference. In an effort to afford the broadest possibility for information gathering, data dissemination, and viewpoint sharing; at times, conferences that include various viewpoints (some of which may not be consistent with the U.S. Government) may be funded, or the content of individual conference presentations may not be known ahead of time. In some cases, Department participation in such conferences ensures that the U.S. Government's position is communicated. Because of the diversity of topics, ideas, viewpoints, and information that may be presented or exchanged during a conference, HHS Policy requires the use of a general disclaimer which may help avoid confusion in situations where certain conference materials contain specific information on percentage of costs financed with federal funds, dollar amount of federal funds

used, and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program that will be financed by non-government sources on publications that result from HHS grant-supported activities, as required by section 506 of the FY06 Appropriations Act. Further, requiring a disclaimer or controlling logo use helps to assure that the audience is not confused into believing that every utterance is an official pronouncement of the agency.

Question 5: Since the end of October, 2005, when Congress was informed that Secretary Leavitt "has directed Department staff to develop a uniform policy on sponsorship," how many sponsorship requests have received scrutiny under the new policies?

Answer: My memorandum of February 3, 2006, establishes interim uniform policy in this area by providing guidance on sponsorship, disclaimers to be included in contracts and grants, procedures for use of HHS and OPDIV logos, and controls on conference travel. And, it directs OPDIV and STAFFDIV Heads to be approve these arrangements. As such, we are asking our agencies about sponsorship requests received and approved since February 3rd, and will provide that information to you.

Question 6: In your testimony you explain that part of the reason conference spending for National Institutes of Health increased over $12 million over 5 years, or 50 percent, was "to assure results of ongoing and completed research were disseminated widely." Do you agree that academic journals, the internet, and teleconferencing or some other form of "E-conferencing" allow an agency to disseminate such research in a more economical manner?

Answer: Using all available technology will assist NIH and all agencies at HHS to better disseminate information. We continue to look at all available resources for this purpose. In many circumstances the free flow of information can only be accomplished through face-to-face interaction. Discussions and interactions with other scientists at meetings, including scientists from academia and industry, can accelerate the pace of medical discovery. These interactions foster the transfer of methods and research tools developed by NIH-supported research—research that is conducted in NIH's own laboratories, and the 80 percent of NIH research supported by grants and contracts to research institutions. NIH considers this information dissemination activity of such importance that competitive awards are made to research institutions to enable them to host conferences and facilitate the exchange of information.

The very latest research results are presented at these meetings. Most essential is the live give-and-take, which cannot be captured in print or electronic form. Questions and discussions of each presentation can reveal significant advantages or problems in a line of inquiry or an experimental approach. This

discussion often triggers thoughts of an important new direction for investigation. Most scientists say that some of their best ideas spring from presentations and discussion at meetings.

Meeting attendance can also save scientists time and resources, since some meeting presentations report small but critical refinements in methods or reveal negative results. Although these types of findings may never be published--and may only emerge during informal discussions that are never captured in print or electronically--they may greatly improve the success or efficiency of a technique or give early notice to other investigators that a particular approach to a research problem is unlikely to work.

Question 7: Do all posters and papers *accepted* for a conference need to be *presented* in person?

Answer: Not all posters and papers accepted for a conference must be presented in-person. NIH has found, however, that live, in-person presentation and discussion of posters and papers is critical for the essential scientific give-and-take that leads to research advances and strengthening of the NIH mission—to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone. It is also plays an important role in the general support of the Nation's scientific community, contributing to research excellence and competitiveness.

Those who present papers at scientific meetings benefit from critical feedback during the discussion of their results by investigators from other labs. This free, informal collegial advice --which is unlikely ever to be offered via recorded media -- can help scientific investigators refine and improve the research far more efficiently and effectively than would be possible within their own labs. It can also lead to the development of collaborations with scientists at other research institutions. Senior investigators at NIH say that the vast majority of their collaborations with other scientists are first established at professional meetings.

For extramural program scientific managers, assessing leadership and standing of large numbers of scientists in a field is important to assembling and running a scientific review group that will evaluate the quality of grant applications, and ultimately determine the direction the entire field will take.

Question 8: While I can understand that you might send participants to a conference to provide alternative viewpoints, in your testimony you state that actual funding for a conference does not translate into an endorsement of the conference themes. Why would an agency, or individual for that matter, send money and support to an event they would not endorse or agree with?

Answer: There are various types of conferences, many of which involve information and exchange for the purposes of exploration/clarification for a defined subject problem or area of knowledge. In an effort to afford the broadest possibility for information gathering, data dissemination, and viewpoint sharing; conference grants may be funded that have various viewpoints (some of which may not be consistent with the U.S. Government). There are also situations in which the Department does not have control over the conference agenda and is, therefore, wary of sponsorship, for example, if the Department is not the sole funding mechanism or is only attending the conference to staff a booth. In addition, conferences may have different funding streams for different portions of the event. While the Department may support a portion of the conference, that does not necessarily implicate sponsorship of the entire event. Further, there are various ways in which the Department provides conference support, such as exhibit booths and speakers, neither of which necessarily amounts to conference sponsorship.

Question 9: You outline a justification, review and approval process in place at the agency for foreign travel where employees submit destination, trip justification, cost and funding source. Do you consider the number of employees requesting to attend a single conference? In 2004, you sent delegations of over 100 people to at least 59 conferences.

a) How can HHS can send 236 people to Barcelona, or over 1,000 people to Orlando for a single conference and claim that oversight has been performed? How does that happen, are reviews and approval conducted in a vacuum?

Answer: My memorandum of February 3, 2006, addresses our new requirements for justification, review and approval of domestic travel as follows:

"The HHS review process required that requests for domestic travel for groups of 20 or more employees, and for trips whose costs exceed $2,500 for one individual, be submitted (by the Operating Division Head or designee(s)) to ASAM (Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management) for review. In addition, effective immediately any domestic travel for groups of five through 19 employees must be submitted to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head or designee(s) for approval. While awaiting formal issuance of revised Departmental travel policies, OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs should adhere to these revised travel policies."

Question 10: Do you agree that sending 50 people from the same agency to one conference is hard to justify, especially when teleconferencing and other forms of "E-conferencing" and the Internet offer economic ways to exchange slides, reports, and so on?

Answer: There are times where sending 50 people or more is done because of different disciplines and the need to provide feedback to a large number of HHS employees who do not attend in person. This leveraging process is based upon a thoughtful decision. Good communication to disseminate and share information is a key to HHS' success, and conferences can be a cost-effective way for HHS to communicate with many stakeholders at one time. Appropriate conferences play a major role in facilitating this communication with and between grantees on policies, goals, best practices and new discoveries. HHS has a large and diverse group of grantees, and their ability to connect with us through "E-conferencing" methods can be rather limited, so it is often necessary to meet with grantees face-to-face.

HHS has expanded the internal controls over conference funding to ensure that such use effectively and efficiently furthers the agencies missions. HHS internal controls require that both the agency head and senior Department management approve travel for conference attendance by 20 or more people within the same agency. These controls are designed to ensure that the use of funds for conference support reflects a considered judgment that supporting/attending a conference is a cost-effective approach to furthering the goals for which funds are appropriated. With this process in place, you can be assured that any conference with 50 or more attendees from the same agency will have gone through a case-by-case review to ensure that this was an effective and efficient use of taxpayer funds to further HHS' mission and goals.

Question 11: I understand it is HHS's policy that no one travels in First Class. Are conference costs built into grants? Grantees travel to conferences on the Department's dime and there are reports of grantees sitting in First Class while Secretary Tommy Thompson was seated in the coach section. They were all going to the same conference.

a) Do you require grantees who travel on funds provided by their HHS grant, contract or cooperative agreement to follow the same travel guidelines as HHS employees?

Answer: No. Grantees are subject to the OMB Cost Principle Circular that is applicable to their type of organization. Travel costs pertaining to: Non-profit organizations is located at OMB A-122 Attachment B, 51; Colleges and Universities is located at OMB A-21 Attachment J, 53; and States, Local Governments and Indian Tribes is located at OMB A-87, Attachment B, 43. However, the language between the three OMB circulars that discusses those instances where travel in other than coach class is permitted is very similar and states:

c. Commercial air travel.

(1) Airfare costs in excess of the customary standard commercial airfare (coach or equivalent), Federal Government contract airfare (where authorized and available), or the lowest commercial discount airfare are unallowable except when such accommodations would:

(a) require circuitous routing;
(b) require travel during unreasonable hours;
(c) excessively prolong travel;
(d) result in additional costs that would offset the transportation savings; or
(e) offer accommodations not reasonably adequate for the traveler's medical needs. The governmental unit must justify and document these conditions on a case-by-case basis in order for the use of first-class airfare to be allowable in such cases.

(2) Unless a pattern of avoidance is detected, the Federal Government will generally not question a organization's determinations that customary standard airfare or other discount airfare is unavailable for specific trips if the organization can demonstrate either of the following: (a) that such airfare was not available in the specific case; or (b) that it is the organization's overall practice to make routine use of such airfare.

d. Air travel by other than commercial carrier. Costs of travel by an organizationally -owned, -leased, or -chartered aircraft include the cost of lease, charter, operation (including personnel costs), maintenance, depreciation, insurance, and other related costs. The portion of such costs that exceeds the cost of allowable commercial air travel, as provided for in subsection c., is unallowable.

Question 12: Your special conference guidance of February 3, 2006 suggests that conference sponsorship decisions must be made so as not to "run afoul of lobbying prohibitions." Can you elaborate what that means? Are there a lot of conferences during which serious advocacy takes place? Would you consider protests of the Secretary to be advocacy or lobbying?

a) Your guidance also requires that sponsorship not run afoul of supporting unallowable costs. I understand that food and drinks are unallowable uses of Federal funds. How do you know that conference support provided by the Department is not supporting meal-time events involving food and drink purchasing?

b) Your guidance reminds managers that the Office of the Inspector General has the authority to impose civil monetary penalties on any entity that uses an HHS logo without authorization. Have you ever imposed such penalties? Why did you not impose these penalties on the organizers of the drug legalization conference in Salt Lake City?

Answer: Our contracts and grants comply with 31 U.S.C. §1352 and prohibit recipients of a Federal contact, grant, or cooperative agreement from using appropriated funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence a Member of Congress and that the purpose of mentioning this in the 2/3/06 memo is to remind conference sponsors that it is their responsibility to insure that contractors and grantees understand the rules which relate to transactions covered under this section.

In addition, in OMB A-21 Attachment J, 32; OMB A-122 Attachment B, 29; and OMB A-87 Attachment B, 27, the language is similar between the three OMB circulars:

> ***Meetings and conferences.*** Costs of meetings and conferences, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information, are allowable. This includes costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. But see Attachment B, section 14, Entertainment costs.

Under Section 1140 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1320b-10), the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) may impose civil monetary penalties of up to $5,000 per misrepresentation against anyone who uses various specified words, letters, and symbols, such as "Health and Human Services," "Medicare" or "CMS," or the symbols or logos of those agencies, to convey the false impression that they are approved, endorsed, or authorized by the agencies. The OIG has proposed penalties against a variety of entities for such misleading marketing practices. As examples, the OIG proposed penalties against a major drug company, cautioning them about their use of "Medicare-endorsed" in their discount drug card. The OIG also issued a warning to a company that published a magazine entitled "U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: 50 Years of Service." The publication, which included numerous glossy pharmaceutical ads, was not approved or endorsed by HHS despite the use of the HHS logo and other devices to create the impression it was an HHS publication. We are advised by OIG that companies often cease their practices upon receipt of a "cease and desist" letter from the OIG.

The OIG also advises that they have received no information of potential misuse of names and symbols in violation of Section 1140 in connection with the drug legalization conference in Salt Lake City. If you or your staff have specific information relating to such a potential violation, please forward it directly to the Inspector General.

Question 13: At this time when our nation has a $8.1 trillion debt, we are fighting a global war on terror, we are recovering from the most expensive natural disaster in our nation's history and we are confronted with emerging threats such as bioterrorism and avian flu, would you agree that efforts are needed to reduce non-essential spending?

Answer: We agree that it is essential to target funding to areas that provide the highest return to the American public. With current tight budgets, all of our agency heads and senior managers are working to ensure the best use of funds. With respect to conferences, the administrative process we have put in place is designed to ensure that the use of funds for conference support reflects a considered judgment that supporting/attending a conference is a cost-effective approach to furthering the goals for which funds are appropriated.

Question 14: You indicated willingness or desire to restrict travel and conference costs. Would you being willing to work with my office this year to write into law some commonsense rules to govern conference, travel and meeting expenses as part of the appropriations process?

a) Planning any event, especially a large conference, must distract numerous employees for many months to orchestrate the meeting. Do conferences actually have an unintended consequence of siphoning away resources and staff time?

b) Is this cost effective use of staff time and resources?

Answer: We believe the administrative oversight process we have put in place is a better solution than targeted legislation. We should then be accountable for our results. The Department has a wide variety of programs, and a wide variety of non-Federal program partners who are responsible for ground-level implementation of those programs. The administrative process we have put in place is designed to ensure that the use of funds for conference support reflects a considered judgment that supporting/attending a conference is a cost-effective approach to furthering the goals for which funds are appropriated. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to craft legislation that could replicate the case-by-case judgment of the Department's agency heads and senior managers.

Staff, like funding, represent a valuable resource that need to be utilized to provide the best return to the American public. When an agency head decides to support a conference, I expect him or her to consider costs in staff time as well as dollars. It should be noted, however, that when a grant or contract is issued to support a conference, much of the coordination work is carried out by the contractor or grantee.

Question 15: Has your department and its agencies purchased equipment to allow teleconferencing?

a) Could you, in follow-up, provide a line itemed and detailed listing of that equipment and the amounts spent for it?

b) What impact-- if any-- has the purchase of this technology had on the number of employees traveling to meetings and the amount spent on conferences?

Answer: HHS has a long history of using these methods for internal meetings and discussions with a range of partners. The Department encourages agencies to use teleconference technology and looks forward to future improvements in disseminating information to maximize the benefits available from communications technology. For example, the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals uses teleconferences as the standard for meetings with appellants. We are in the process of gathering information on the capacity for and use of web-casting and videoconferencing, I would like to focus staff time and attention forward as much as possible. Your requests ask for a detailed listing of equipment and amounts spent.

This would require a substantial redirection of staff time across the Department to collect detailed information on equipment inventories and systematically link that to the impact of those inventories on travel to meetings. I am requesting an inventory of our existing capability to use web-casting and video conferencing. This will establish a basis for our capacity to use technology in the future and a basis to determine if further capacity is needed. I hope this meets the intent of your request without producing a detailed listing of past purchases.

Question 16: Have you considered reimbursing employees for incidentals instead of issuing per diems as a way to cut costs? Per diems allow staff to actually make money from official travel.

a) When issuing per diems does anyone consider that a majority of the meals are often included in the conference fees?

Answer: The Department of Health and Human Services requires compliance with the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) 301-74.21, when meals are furnished by the Department or are included in the registration fee the applicable M&IE rate is reduced in accordance with the FTR 301-11.18. If all meals are provided, the employee's reimbursement is limited to the incidental expense only. If light refreshments are furnished then no deduction in the M&IE allowance is required.

March 27, 2006

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Deputy Assistant Secretary Sid Kaplan by
Senator Tom Coburn
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
for February 7, 2006 hearing on conference spending

Question:

The Department provides funding and support to conferences held by the same organizations every year, or sometime even more frequently.

a. Why is it necessary to spend tax dollars to help support gatherings of the same individuals to discuss the same general themes every year?

Answer:

The geo-political and strategic objectives are in constant flux globally. As a result it is necessary to have individuals who are familiar with the ongoing themes present at these gatherings.

Question:

b. Are there any requirements for such groups to provide a rationale to the department as to why the government should fund their gatherings when they occur so frequently?

Answer

The Department instituted a formal vetting process in FY2004. This process affects all conferences in general, but for those with 25 or more participants pre-approval by the Under Secretary for Management is required.

Requests must be submitted at least 120 days in advance of the event and must include a justification covering the following areas: 1) the benefit to the Department; 2) the outcome or results expected for participants; 3) security risks; 4) cost; 5) how the conference advances the Department's strategic priorities.

Overseas: A review of who will attend is done by the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission along with the Financial Management and Management Officers. The final approval is with the Ambassador. In addition, the country team, which is made up of the agencies at the embassies, also is part of the decision making process when it directly affects their funding pool and the chairman. In addition all agencies sit in on the working capital fund meetings chaired by the Management Officer of Deputy Chief of Mission and decide on how resources will be spent. Domestic: Bureaus determine attendance at a conference based on their financial planning numbers and budget priorities. Final approval is done by the bureau's executive office.

Question:

c. Please provide a list of any groups and non-government entities that have held at least three conferences primarily sponsored that the department or agencies within the department have sponsored or provided some type of support to during the previous five years.

Answer:

The Department has provided support to UNESCO, OAS, and European Union conferences which have held three or more conferences over the previous five years.

Question:

Can you provide an estimate of what you expect the total conference related costs, including travel, staff time, preparation and contributions, for the department is likely to be in FY 2006?

Answer:

The Department has estimated that FY2006 conference related cost will be $28.1M.

Question:

You indicated some willingness or desire to restrict travel and conference costs. Would you be willing to work with my office this year to write into law some commonsense rules to govern conference, travel and meeting expenses as part of the appropriations process?

Answer:

The Department is always looking for opportunities to improve operating efficiency and effectiveness and would be willing to work through the OMB review process to comment on proposed legislation involving conference costs.

Question:

Planning any event, especially a large conference, must distract numerous employees for many months to orchestrate the meeting. Do conferences actually have an unintended consequence of siphoning away resources and staff time?

a. Is this cost effective use of staff time and resources?

Answer:

Well planned conferences are a necessary part of our business. The Department carefully evaluates which conferences we hold and attend to ensure the effective use of both staff and resources.

Question:

Has your department and its agencies purchased equipment to allow teleconferencing?

Answer:

Yes

Question:

a. Could you provide a line itemed and detailed listing of that equipment and the amounts spent for it?

Answer:

The Department has deployed about 500 unclassified video systems both foreign and domestic over the past several years. Costs per system ranged from $2k to $20k per site. During the past two years the Department added video to its classified network, placing about 100 systems worldwide. The cost for this latest deployment was approximately $3 million and shared between the Department and its military partners who use the capability at posts.

Question:

b. What impact-- if any-- has the purchase of this technology had on the number of employees traveling to meetings and the amount spent on conferences?

Answer:

The use of video teleconferencing equipment lowered the number of employees traveling to meetings and the overall cost of conference

attendance. In addition to supporting a reduction in travel, it facilitates a more dynamic exchange across the Department; and improves productivity of people; people are better able to exchange ideas face to face in additional situations where travel would not be considered.

Question:

Have you considered reimbursing employees for incidentals instead of issuing per diems as a way to cut costs?

Answer:

The Department switched to lodging plus meals and incidental expenses vice actual costs several years ago after a study found it was more costly to submit actual costs and it was a lot less paperwork.

Question:

a. When issuing per diems does anyone consider that a majority of the meals are included in the conference fees?

Answer:

Current regulations require that an employee exclude from per diem any meals that are provided to employee. Therefore, an employee should not receive reimbursement in instances where meals have been provided while in attendance at a conference.

Question:

Do most of the conferences supported by your agency have an obvious outcome that advances your agency's mission?

Answer:

The Department's approval, planning and review process helps to ensure that conferences advance the goals and objectives set by the Secretary.

Question:

I realize that a large part of the State Department's business relies on travel and face to face meetings. Do you have a more rigorous vetting process in place to ensure that the U.S. is not supporting ideas or individuals and conferences which conflict with American interests?

Answer:

The Department's approval process for conferences, as previously outlined, effectively "vets" that the objectives associated with Department attendance at those events best serves U.S. national interests.

Question:

In February 2005 the State Department sent officials to a counterterrorism conference in Saudi Arabia. Why would the State Department send a delegation to a conference, which purposefully excluded our ally Israel and included state sponsors of terrorism, Iran and Syria?

a. What was the message delivered by the State Department at this conference?

b. Does the U.S. presence imply a form of endorsement of the ideas promoted at this event?

Answer:

On February 5-8, 2005, a U.S. delegation led by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, joined delegations from more than 50 countries and international organizations at the Counterterrorism International Conference in Riyadh,

Saudi Arabia. The U.S. delegation included representatives from the National Security Council, Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies.

In her opening statement to the conference, Ms. Townsend strongly criticized the remaining state sponsors of terrorism and quoted President Bush from 2001: "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make - either you are with us or you are with the terrorists;" and 2005: "Iran remains the world's primary state sponsor of terror."

The conference's concluding communiqué, known as the "Riyadh Declaration", addresses terrorism in landmark terms for an international document. The Declaration states explicitly that, "No matter what pretext terrorists may use for their deeds, terrorism has no justification. Terrorism under all circumstances, regardless of the alleged motives, should be universally condemned." The Declaration also acknowledges the "need to prevent any intolerance against any religion", another key U.S. objective. The presence of U.S. representation ensured that our position on terrorism was highlighted in the final communiqué. Had we chosen not to participate the wording could have been different.

Question:

In December the State Department sent a deputy assistant secretary to a conference sponsored by a known anti-Semitic group which vocally opposes the U.S. government's efforts to shut down terrorist financiers, sponsors militant rallies and conferences, associates with known radical Islamists, and rationalizes Palestinian suicide bombings. They call Hezbollah and Hamas "freedom fighters." In her speech at the conference, the senior State official

praised the conference sponsors as "engaged" and encouraged people to listen to them and their ideas.

a. Why did the State Department send an official to praise a group which has a well documented history of supporting radical groups and terrorist causes?

Answer:

As U/S Hughes has made clear, the Administration is committed to a program of promoting outreach to a broad range of communities, including the American Muslim community to explain U.S. policy, the importance of combating extremism and the proliferation of terrorism, and encouraging moderate Muslims to play a leadership role in this effort.

That was precisely the message of the Administration officials who attended this conference, and we will continue to engage representatives of the American Muslim community in an effort to advance these critically important goals.

Question:

In 2004, the State Department sent 50 or more employees to at least 14 conferences. Do you have a limit on how many people are permitted to travel to a single conference?

Answer:

The Department sends representatives from appropriate bureaus to conferences. Any group of twenty five or more must go through a vetting process with approval by the Under Secretary for Management.

Question:

a. Have you ever consciously sent a smaller delegation and used E-conferencing to loop in more employees who did not travel to the meeting or conference?

Answer:

Yes, the Department sends smaller delegations and uses conferencing equipment if the communication and representation is consistent with the Departments needs.

Question:

Public law 109–108 signed by President Bush on November 22, 2005 stated "None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to send or otherwise pay for the attendance of more than 50 employees of agencies or departments of the United States Government who are stationed in the United States, at any single international conference occurring outside the United States, unless the Secretary of State determines that such attendance is in the national interest."

a. Has any such conference requiring attendance of more than employees occurred since this law was signed? If so please list and include a detailed summary of the national interest involved. Has this law hindered in any significant way the Department's ability to fulfill its mission?

Answer:

The Department is unaware of any instance since the enactment date in which SSJC funds were used to pay the expenses of more than 50 USG employees stationed in the United States to attend such a conference.
It is the Department's policy to keep delegations to international conferences to the smallest size necessary to advance USG interests. We are unaware of any situation in which this law has impeded the Department's ability to fulfill its mission.

Questions for the Record from Senator Coburn for:
James M. Martin, Acting Chief Financial Officer,
U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD Answers to Questions for the Record
April 20, 2006

For February 7, 2006 Hearing On
"Federal Agencies and Conference Spending"
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management,
Government Information and International Security
Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
United States Senate

1. The department provides funding and support to conferences held by the same organizations every year, or sometime even more frequently.
   a. Why is it necessary to spend tax dollars to help support gatherings of the same individuals to discuss the same general themes every year?

Answer: Effective communication of HUD's program goals and requirements to program beneficiaries, third party program administrators and other public interest groups or program stakeholders is a critical component of HUD's program management and control environment. In many cases, HUD's current conference participation is a substitute for or extension of local program "capacity building" grants that the Congress used to appropriate for HUD programs. In most cases, HUD sends a speaker or small panel of program experts to convey its message at gatherings already arranged and paid for by the various public interest groups with a stake in HUD's programs. This is a more cost-effective way of delivering HUD program information than for HUD to directly sponsor and fund such gatherings with tax dollars. The themes of HUD's message do differ from year to year, given that HUD's program landscape is constantly changing in terms of proposed and actual changes to program statutes, regulations, funding levels, delivery and control systems, reporting requirements, goals, etc. In addition, the make-up of the audience is subject to changes from year to year, due to normal staff turnover and the need for orientation or training for new staff.

   b. Are there any requirements for such groups to provide a rationale to the department as to why the government should fund their gatherings when they occur so frequently?

Answer: The HUD Office of General Counsel has issued "Departmental Guidance on Co-sponsored Events" to better assure that any proposed co-sponsorships are serving the interests of the Department and are within all legal and ethical guidelines. A decision for HUD to co-sponsor an event must be approved by the appropriate Assistant Secretary, or officer of equivalent rank, in the form of a written co-sponsorship agreement that includes a description of how the co-

sponsored event serves the interest of the Department in terms of furthering the Department's mission or providing direct training and information regarding HUD programs or activities. HUD has other policy guidance to govern staff participation in conferences or other widely attended gatherings sponsored by non-federal sources, and those guidelines require justification and approval based on benefit to the programs or operations of the Department.

c. Please provide a list of any groups and non-government entities that have held at least three conferences that the department or agencies within the department have sponsored or provided some type of support to during the previous five years.

Answer: Attached is a partial listing of some of HUD's national program stakeholder groups. Many of these organizations hold national and/or local conferences for their memberships and HUD frequently participates in those or other conferences to disseminate or communicate program information. In FY 2005, HUD participated in at least one national or local conference activity for over one-third of the 170 entities on this list, and likely participated in 3 or more conference activities with many of these organizations over the past 5 years. HUD previously provided the Subcommittee Chairman with a listing of 989 conferences attended by HUD staff in FY 2005. That listing also included many other local program stakeholder groups that HUD frequently communicates with through conference activities. The organizations on these lists directly relate to the Department's mission.

d. Can you provide an estimate of what you expect the total conference related costs, including travel, staff time, preparation and contributions, for the department is likely to be in FY 2006?

Answer: HUD's estimate of conference expense in FY 2006 is $12.36 million.

2. At this time when our nation has a $8.1 trillion debt, we are fighting a global war on terror, we are recovering from the most expensive natural disaster in our nation's history and we are confronted with emerging threats such as bioterrorism and avian flu, would you agree that efforts are needed to reduce non-essential spending?

Answer: HUD management strives to eliminate non-essential spending in any budget environment, and agrees that the current budget climate warrants that

tough decisions have to be made between competing priorities for limited funding. While we do not view the purpose of conferences -- training and communications -- as non-essential activities, we do agree on the need to direct such activities to where they are most needed and to continually strive to conduct such activities in a cost-efficient and effective manner.

3. You indicated willingness or desire to restrict travel and conference costs. Would you be willing to work with my office this year to write into law some commonsense rules to govern conference, travel and meeting expenses as part of the appropriations process?

Answer: HUD remains committed to making the Department more accountable and ensuring the proper use of taxpayer dollars. However, the application of any funding limit on conference spending would unnecessarily restrict agencies' ability to effectively manage their programs. A focus on increased after-the-fact reporting on conference activities may add greater external transparency to activity but is not viewed as necessary or cost-beneficial, given HUD's existing controls over approving conference activities and the increased administrative cost of providing such information. Nevertheless, HUD is assessing opportunities for improved internal oversight of conference activity to better ensure that HUD is considering the most cost-effective means of information dissemination and determining that all conference spending is beneficial to the interests of the Department.

4. Planning any event, especially a large conference, must distract numerous employees for many months to orchestrate the meeting. Do conferences actually have an unintended consequence of siphoning away resources and staff time?
    a. Is this cost effective use of staff time and resources?

Answer: Resources and staff time devoted to educating and training program participants on program requirements can actually serve to improve compliance and performance and to reduce waste and the need for costly corrective action.

5. Has your department and its agencies purchased equipment to allow teleconferencing?
    a. Could you provide a line itemed and detailed listing of that equipment and the amounts spent for it?
    b. What impact-- if any-- has the purchase of this technology had on the number of employees traveling to meetings and the amount spent on conferences?

Answer: HUD has established Satellite Broadcast capability that is currently funded for available use 6 and 1/2 hours a day on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. HUD's satellite network has downlinks to all 86 HUD office sites, to provide two-way interaction for training and other information dissemination activities with HUD staff or visitors to HUD facilities. HUD has expanded its satellite link to reach the public housing agency community that administers the preponderance of HUD's program funding. Most activities that are satellite broadcast are also web-cast over HUD's local area network and/or the Internet to reach a wider audience. As the technical graphic presentation capabilities of web casts improve, HUD will continue to expand its use of such abilities to reach larger audiences in a more cost-efficient manner. In FY 2005, HUD used its satellite broadcast capability to conduct 120 broadcasts/web-casts. Web-casts are popularly used for announcing grant application processes, and have been viewed by as many as 1,100 internal HUD participants at a time, with an unlimited number of possible external participants via the Internet. HUD has also established a telecommunications network for videoconferencing to provide HUD managers the ability to conduct regional or national meetings and training. In FY 2005, HUD conducted 460 videoconference meetings.

6. Have you considered reimbursing employees for incidentals instead of issuing per diems as a way to cut costs? Per diems allow staff to actually make money from official travel.
   a. When issuing per diems does anyone consider that a majority of the meals are often included in the conference fees?

Answer: HUD adheres to the Government Travel Regulations (GTR) issued by the General Services Administration to govern all government travel. When meals are provided as part of a conference, the GTRs provide that a specified reduction factor be applied to the per diem allowance otherwise allowed.

7. How do you explain your 340 percent increase in conference spending over the past five years? With the freedom and cost saving options afforded by technology and the Internet, would you agree that there are more economical alternatives to conferences and travel?

Answer: HUD's spending on conference participation varies with the extent of change in HUD's program environment and the need to communicate information on those changes to the Department's numerous program stakeholders. The $3.2 million in HUD conference spending in FY 2001 was unusually low for annual conference spending because it was a political transition year in which career staff

typically maintain the status quo in its program operations, awaiting the new program policy agenda of the new administration. HUD also participates in conferences as a cost-effective means of obtaining training for HUD staff. The Government Accountability Office's (GAO) internal control standards point out the need for effective communications with program stakeholders, and for adequate staff training, as components of an effective internal control system over federal programs. While HUD continues to increase the use of advancing technology as a more cost-effective means of disseminating information, there are still situations where face-to-face interactions in conference settings are more effective and beneficial.

8. In 2004, HUD sent 50 or more employees to at least 7 conferences. It seems many of your conferences are related to internal matters. This being the case, would it be more economical to email out the reports and power point slides, and then do a formal teleconference or conference call?

Answer: HUD's use of conference calls, satellite broadcasts and Internet web-casts are now generally the preferred means of internal communication, versus the more costly traditional conference type activities. The Department's planned office automation upgrades will provide for "live meeting" capabilities for staff across the country, to further reduce the need for funding traditional conference type activities.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Partial Stakeholder Listing

1. ACORN (Association of Community Organizations)
2. ADAPT
3. Affordable Housing Association of Certified Public Accountants
4. Affordable Housing Coalition
5. Affordable Housing Management Association (AHMA)
6. AIDS Action Council
7. Alliance for Children and Families
8. Alliance for Retired Americans
9. American Association of Enterprise Zones
10. American Association of Homes and Services for the Aged
11. American Association of Retired Persons
12. American Association of Service Coordinators
13. American Bankers Association
14. American Chamber of Commerce
15. American Economic Development Council
16. American Enterprise Institute
17. American Institute of Architects
18. American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
19. American Land Title Association
20. American League of Financial Institutions
21. American Legislative Exchange Council
22. American Network of Community Options and Resource
23. American Planning Association
24. American Real Estate Society
25. America's Community Bankers
26. Appraisal Institute
27. Assisted Living Federation of America
28. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
29. Association of Government Accountants (AGA)
30. Association of Housing & Services for Aged
31. Association of Jewish Aging Services
32. Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies
33. Association of Real Estate Appraisers
34. B'nai B'rith
35. Building Owners and Managers Association
36. Catholic Charities, USA
37. Center for Community Change
38. Center for Policy Alternatives
39. Center on Budget & Policy Priorities
40. Child Welfare League of America
41. Children's Defense Fund
42. Community Action Partnership

43. Community Development Financial Institution Fund
44. Consumer Federation of America
45. Corporation for Supportive Housing
46. Council for Affordable & Rural Housing
47. Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
48. Council of State Community Development Agencies
49. Council of State Governments
50. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
51. Habitat for Humanity
52. Heritage Foundation
53. Housing and Development Law Institute
54. Housing Assistance Council
55. Ibero-American Chamber of Commerce
56. Institute for Professional & Economic Development
57. Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM)
58. Institute for Responsible Housing Preservation
59. Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Programs
60. International City Managers Association
61. International Council of Shopping Centers
62. International Downtown Association
63. International Economic Development Council
64. Jefferson Government Relations
65. Jefferson Housing Foundation
66. Joint Center for Housing Studies
67. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
68. Latino Civil Rights Center
69. League of United Latin American Citizens
70. Local Initiatives Support Corporation
71. Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs
72. Lutheran Services in America
73. Manufactured Housing Institute
74. McAuley Institute
75. Mortgage Bankers Association
76. Mortgage Insurance Companies of America
77. National Association of Latino Elected Officials
78. National Affordable Housing Management Association
79. National AIDS Housing Coalition
80. National Alliance for the Mentally III
81. National Alliance of HUD Tenants
82. National Alliance to End Homelessness
83. National American Indian Housing Council
84. National Apartment Association
85. National Association for County Community and Economic
86. National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
87. National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
88. National Association of Black County Officials

89. National Association of Community Action Agencies
90. National Association of Counties
91. National Association of Development Organizations
92. National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals
93. National Association of Home Builders
94. National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
95. National Association of Housing Cooperatives
96. National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies
97. National Association of Mortgage Brokers
98. National Association of Neighborhoods
99. National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB)
100. National Association of Realtors
101. National Association of Regional Councils
102. National Association of State Development Agencies
103. National Association of State Units on Aging
104. National Association of the Remodeling Industry
105. National Association of Towns and Townships
106. National Bankers Association
107. National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials
108. National Black Caucus of State Legislatures
109. National Caucus and Center on Black Aged
110. National Coalition for Homelessness
111. National Community Action Foundation
112. National Community Development Association
113. National Community Reinvestment Coalition
114. National Conference of Black Mayors
115. National Conference of State Legislatures
116. National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards
117. National Congress for Community Economic Development
118. National Congress of American Indians
119. National Cooperative Bank
120. National Council of La Raza
121. National Council of State Housing Agencies
122. National Council on Aging
123. National Council on Disability
124. National Council on Independent Living
125. National Development Corporation
126. National Fair Housing Alliance
127. National Fire Protection Association
128. National Governors Association
129. National Housing and Rehabilitation Association
130. National Housing Conference
131. National Housing Law Project
132. National Housing Trust
133. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
134. National Lead Abatement and Assessors Council

135. National League of Cities
136. National Leased Housing Association
137. National Legal Center for the Public Interest
138. National Low Income Housing Coalition
139. National Multi-Housing Council
140. National Neighborhood Coalition
141. National Organization of African-Americans in Housing
142. National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.
143. National Puerto Rican Forum
144. National Rehabilitation Lenders Association
145. National Resource Center for Supporting Home & Home
146. National Rural Housing Coalition
147. National Trust for Historic Preservation
148. National Urban League
149. Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation
150. North American Insulation Manufacturers Association
151. Paralyzed Veterans of America
152. Partners for Livable Communities
153. Public Housing Authorities Development Association
154. Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA)
155. Real Estate Roundtable
156. Real Estate Service Providers Council (RESPRO)
157. Southeastern Affordable Housing Management Association
158. The ARC
159. The Brookings Institution
160. The Enterprise Foundation
161. The International Economic Development Council
162. The Urban Institute
163. U.S. Chamber of Commerce
164. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
165. U.S. Conference of Mayors
166. U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
167. United Jewish Communities
168. United Way of America
169. Urban Land Institute
170. Volunteers of America

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUN 19 2006

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Honorable Tom Coburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government
Information, and International Security
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed, for insertion into the hearing record, are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) remaining responses to follow-up questions from the February 7, 2006 hearing on "Federal Agencies and Conference Spending" before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security. I hope this information will be useful to you and Members of the Committee.

The enclosed responses are to questions which required additional data collection. As a result of this data, we have examined our activities and continue to handle them in a responsible, effective manner. EPA is also taking this opportunity to develop an Agency policy to save costs on major conferences and meetings in our FY 2008 planning process.

Thank you for providing EPA the opportunity to testify on this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Reynold Meni in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at 202-564-3669.

Sincerely,

Stephanie N. Daigle
Associate Administrator

Enclosures

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Questions for the Record from Senator Coburn for:
Michael W.S. Ryan, Deputy Chief Financial Officer,
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA's Remaining Responses to Follow-up Questions from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security
February 7, 2006 Hearing on Federal Agencies and Conference Spending

QUESTION 1 (a): The department provides funding and support to conferences held by the same organizations every year, or sometime even more frequently. Why is it necessary to spend tax dollars to help support gatherings of the same individuals to discuss the same general themes every year?

ANSWER :

The focus, speakers and attendees of these meetings change from year to year in order to cover a wide variety of related topics and issues. There are new situations and new policies that arise that require discussion and training. Best practices can be shared from project to project within the same program. These annual meetings help our program experts to maintain currency regarding these issues and encourage both communication and cooperation between the interested communities, states, industry groups, non-profit organizations, and EPA.

Science is constantly changing with new research and important studies being presented every year. It is critical that the EPA researchers meet with their colleagues to network, discuss the science as well as present EPA's research to the scientific community. Many annual meetings bring together experts from industry, academia, research organizations and government entities. The participation of these experts in research provides an ideal opportunity for the sharing and discussion of new ideas, research, methods, and technology to further the goal of protecting the environment.

QUESTION 1 (b): Are there any requirements for such groups to provide a rationale to the department as to why the government should fund their gatherings when they occur so frequently?

ANSWER:

Yes. When EPA funds conferences through grants and cooperative agreements, the funding recipient must demonstrate to EPA's satisfaction that the conference will further public understanding of current environmental issues and that the conference does not duplicate the subject matter of previous conferences that EPA has supported. EPA has decentralized management authority to the Offices' and Regions' senior managers. The senior management within those organizations are given discretion to determine the best ways to address environmental needs, which includes holding conferences. EPA has been urged a number of times by Congress to maintain a close understanding of community environmental needs; one of the tools for communication is conferences. The recipient's grant application would provide this information. Also, EPA organizations

fulfill statutory and regulatory requirements by hosting conferences on a recurring basis. A statutory example is the following:

- Sections 8 and 15 of the Small Business Act, as amended, Public Law 95-507 which allows the EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) to hold "counseling sessions" six times a year for various categories of small and disadvantaged businesses.

QUESTION 1 (c): Please provide a list of any groups and non-government entities that have held at least three conferences that the department or agencies within the department have sponsored or provided some type of support to during the previous five years.

ANSWER:

The following is a list of groups and non-government entities that have held at least three conferences that the EPA has sponsored or provided some type of support to during the previous five years.

Region 01 (Boston)
New England Tribes
State and Local Asbestos Inspectors
Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Inspectors
Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) / EPA Region 01/New Jersey DEP Basic Air Toxics Risk Assessment Workshop
The New England Biological Assessment of Wetlands Work Group
NESCAUM – Northeast Diesel Collaborative Clean Ports Workshop
Long Island Sound – Climate Change and Long Island Sound: The Heat is on
Long Island Sound Watershed Alliance; Citizens Summit
New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission – Preventing and reducing closures at coastal beaches
Environmental Directors of Federally Recognized Indian Tribes of New England

Region 02 (New York)
Long Island Sound Citizens Summit – co-sponsored by Save the Sound

Region 05 (Chicago)
IEO: IEO has only provided the venue (EPA conference rooms at no cost), agenda setting, and logistical support. IEO has not sponsored any groups to attend this conference.
WD: During the past five years, Region 5 has hosted the EPA-sponsored Surface Water Monitoring and Standards Meeting (SWiMS).
Great Lakes National Program Office: The Lake Michigan forum

Region 06 (Dallas)
Regional Tribal Operations Committee and Summit.

Region 10 (Seattle)
The Tribal Leaders Summit.

Office of the Administrator
Institutions receiving financial support from National Council on Economic Education for three or more conferences over the previous five years include:

Resources for the Future – conferences and workshops on topical environmental economics issues, such as: measuring costs and expenditures by manufacturers to abate pollution; using cost-effectiveness measures to evaluate health and safety programs; measuring economic impacts from reuse of contaminated properties
Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AERE) – annual workshops on research in environmental and natural resource economics focused on national issues
North Carolina State University - Center for Environmental and Resource Economics and Policy (CEnREP); annual workshops on research in environmental and natural resource economics with some emphasis on eastern and southern issues
University of California – Santa Barbara; workshops on research in environmental and natural resource economics with some emphasis on western issues
Iowa State University – Center for Agricultural and Rural Development; workshops on research in environmental and natural resource economics with some emphasis on Midwestern issues
University of California – Irvine; workshops on capital markets and environmental performance

National Center for Education Information (NCEI) hosts four periodic conferences:

State/EPA Environmental Innovation Symposia (18 month cycle)
National Conference for Small Business Ombudsmen/Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBO/SBEAP) (Annual)
New Partners for Smart Growth (Annual)
National Environmental Partnership Summit and Performance Track National Meeting

EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) has supported the following groups in the past five years.

U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
HBCU Deans of Business Roundtable
National Black MBA Association
Minority-Serving Institutions
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO)
U.S. Asian American Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce
National Association of Professional Asian American Women
Veterans Business Journal (Veteran Owned Business Expos)

VA's Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Conferences
The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development
Minority Entrepreneurship Education, Inc.
Puerto Rico Minority Business Opportunity Committee Conference
Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council
FraserNet, Inc. (Power Networking Conferences)
National Contract Management Association
Delaware Small Business Development Center
Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce
National Procurement Council
Charleston Area Alliance (Charleston, West Virginia)
Congressional Black Caucus
Federal Business Council, Inc.
Minority Business Development Agency (Department of Commerce – includes MED Week Conferences)
Department of Energy annual procurement conferences
Black Chamber of Commerce
Jackson State University's Women of Color Entrepreneurs Conference
Brownfields Conference
SBA matchmaking events and Small Business conferences

Office of International Activities
Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (provided some type of support)

Office of Administration and Resources Management
Laboratories for the 21st Century Program - Sponsored by: EPA's Sustainability and Practices Branch, Facilities Management and Services Division

Past Conferences
Labs21 2005 Annual Conference, October 18-20, Portland, Oregon
Labs21 2004 Annual Conference, October 5-7, St. Louis, Missouri
Labs21 2003 Annual Conference, October 21-23, Denver, Colorado
Labs21 2002 Annual Conference, October 7-9, 2002, Durham, North Carolina
Labs21 2001 Annual Conference, January 8-10, 2002, Washington, DC

Office of Environmental Information
The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)

Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances
The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable

Office of Research and Development
Water Environment Federation
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Coordinating Research Council (CRC)
The American Association for Aerosol Research

International Society for Environmental Epidemiology
Environmental Technologies Verification
National Atlantic Treaty Organization
World Health Organization
Aspen Cancer Conference, Inc.
Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry
Ecological Society of America
American Chemical Society

Office of Air and Radiation
National Environmental Health Association
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
National Association of School Nurses
American Lung Association
Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors
Center for Disease Control
American Respiratory Care Foundation
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
U.S. EPA Indoor Environments National Meeting
Diesel Technology Forum
Manufacturer's of Emission Controls Association
Asilomar conference
Association for Commuter Transportation
Alliance for Work Life Progress
Coordinating Research Council On-Road Vehicle Emissions Workshop

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST):
OUST provides assistance agreements to Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO) and NEIWPCC to co-sponsor the annual National Tanks Conference and the State Fund Administrators' Conference. The National Tanks Conference has occurred every March and the State Fund Administrators Conference has occurred every June for the past five years.

Office of Solid Waste (OSW):
ASTSWMO conferences are sponsored by ASTSWMO – not the EPA or the Office of Solid Waste. ASTSWMO received funding from the Office of Solid Waste in the form of Grants, some of which is used to conduct the conferences.

Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment (OBCR):
The International City/County Management Association: National Brownfields Conference

Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute: HMTRI Brownfields Job Training All Grantees Meeting

Land Revitalization:
An active cooperative agreement with the National Association of Local Government Environment Professionals (NALGEP) supported a series of revitalization roundtables in communities around the country. Each roundtable had different participants from that local community, but all were aimed at better understanding and improving the cleanup and revitalization efforts. The roundtable series is now complete and NALGEP has published its research.

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
National Inspector Workshop
The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable

QUESTION 2: Can you provide an estimate of what you expect the total conference related costs, including travel, staff time, preparation and contributions, for the department is likely to be in FY 2006?

ANSWER: Please see attached chart.

QUESTION 6 (a): Has EPA purchased teleconferencing equipment from 2000 - present? Please provide an itemized listing of that equipment and the costs.

ANSWER: Since FY 2000, EPA has purchased videoteleconferencing equipment. We believe it is important to remain in close communication with fellow employees as well as constituent groups. Since FY 2000, EPA has spent approximately $3,466,800 on videoteleconferencing equipment. Please see attached chart.

QUESTION 6 (b): What impact-- if any-- has the purchase of this technology had on the number of employees traveling to meetings?

ANSWER:

The purchase of teleconferencing and videoteleconferencing technology has reduced the travel costs and the number of employees traveling to meetings. In addition, as a result of the purchase of this technology, a greater number of EPA employees were able to participate in the video or teleconference format than limited travel dollars would have allowed.

QUESTION 11: Please list the number of off-site meetings of EPA staff that occurred in the past fiscal year, including year, location, cost of meeting, purpose (training, retreat, planning, etc.), and number of employees. "Off-site" means taking place anywhere not owned or leased by EPA.

ANSWER: As previously stated, EPA believes that it is important to remain in close communication with fellow employees. As such, during FY 2005, EPA spent $8,053,300 to send approximately 12,890 employees to internal EPA business meetings such as training, staff retreats, and information exchange. Please see attached chart.

Question 2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Projected Costs for FY 2006 Conferences
(Dollars in Thousands)

	Travel & Related Costs	Estimated EPA Staff Hours	Preparation & Contributions
Region 1 (Boston)	$6.9	1,182.0	$26.1
Region 2 (New York)	$13.4	552.0	$11.6
Region 3 (Philadelphia)	$22.3	3,680.0	$394.6
Region 4 (Atlanta)	$40.1	12,010.0	$63.7
Region 5 (Chicago)	$31.9	1,234.0	$128.2
Region 6 (Dallas)	$123.3	11,591.5	$165.1
Region 7 (Kansas City)	$111.2	1,087.0	$20.5
Region 8 (Denver)	$11.0	770.0	$61.0
Region 9 (San Francisco)	$25.8	1,375.0	$404.4
Region 10 (Seattle)	$68.3	2,424.0	$105.2
Office of the Administrator	$374.4	25,389.0	$1,378.1
Office of International Affairs	$9.5	1,640.0	$115.5
Office of Administration & Resources	$18.9	4,619.0	$254.4
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	$0.0	0.0	$0.0
Office of Environmental Information	$7.5	680.0	$256.1
Office of Prevention, Pesticides & Toxic	$30.0	696.0	$171.5
Office of Research & Development	$448.6	13,076.0	$2,263.7
Office of Air & Radiation	$125.7	5,601.0	$1,887.0
Office of Water	$199.5	5,142.0	$923.6
Office of Inspector General	$0.0	0.0	$0.0
Office of General Counsel	$0.0	0.0	$0.0
Office of Solid Waste & Emergency	$1,224.1	43,628.0	$3,787.2
Office of Enforcement & Compliance	$170.8	1,130.0	$170.2
Agency Total	**$3,063.3**	**137,506.5**	**$12,587.8**

Question 6 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Video Teleconferencing Equipment Costs FY 2000- 2006

(Dollars in Thousands)

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
		REGION 1	
2003	Polycom FX	$27.5	360 conferences estimated savings of $621,000
2004	Polycom vsx 4000	$111.9	14 conferences estimated savings of $24,150
		REGION 2	
2002	Tandberg 880 System	$16.5	
2003	3 Polycom EX Systems	$43.1	
2004	Polycom VSX 7400IP	$10.6	
2005	Tandberg 880 System	$21.2	
		REGION 3	
2002	Polycom	$0.4	
2003	Videoconferencing System & Polycoms	$52.0	Installed at Ft. Meade, MD for use during HQs COOP deployment
2004	Videoconferencing System & Polycoms	$101.2	Reduced some travel between Philadelphia and Washington, DC
2005	Polycoms	$1.8	
		REGION 4	
2006	Video Conferencing	$80.0	The video teleconferencing equip. in the Regional Administrator's (RA) conference room has saved approximately 5-10 travel trips per year. The video teleconf. equip. has been used by other Reg 04 Div. when the main teleconf. Room was not available. Also, the equipment has enabled us to view CD and DVD presentations which we would have had to purchase additional video equip. to view.

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
		REGION 5	
2002	Polycom G2200-08666-01 Viewstation MP - US	$14.4	Region 5: Used in various video conferences - available to entire Region to reduce travel costs.
2003	Polycom Video Conferencing System	$15.0	Region 5: Allows Great Lakes National Program Manager to participate in regular Regional Administrator conferences without traveling.
2004	Polycom Video Conferencing System	$15.0	Region 5: Used in various video conferences - available to entire Region to reduce travel costs.
2004	Polycom Video Conferencing System	$15.0	Region 2: Used to allow Region 2 to have monthly video conferences with GLNPO and participation in various Lake-Wide management, Area of concern and Legacy act conferences.
2004	Polycom Video Conferencing System	$15.0	Great Lakes National Program Office: Allows GLNPO to conference with Region 2, ORD, Canadian and other various conferences for significant savings in travel costs.
2006	Tandberg 770 Video Conferencing System	$10.0	Research Vessel Lake Guardian: Will support educational mission of the R/V Lake Guardian as well as management and safety support.
		REGION 6	
2002	2 Polycom View Stations each with 32" Monitor and Accessories	$28.3	Reduced Travel between lab and regional office
2004	2 Polycom view Stations each with JVC 32" Display & Accessories	$20.0	Reduced Travel for the RA with the Administrator and Headquarters AA
		REGION 7	
2006	Audio Visual Equip	14.6	Provide low cost multi-media solutions for training, conferences, or any other type of communication needs
2006	Upgrade Video Conferencing Equipment Regional Administrator Conference RM	$45.3	Provide low cost multi-media solutions for training, conferences, or any other type of communication needs

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
		REGION 8	
2000	1 Polycom Conference Phone	$0.8	R8 has a complete AV/Audio Teleconferenceing Room that is available to all employees on a first-come, first-serve basis. R8 encourages employees to use teleconferenceing preferable to travel when possible. The impact on budget cannot be quantified but results in more effective operations and redirection of limited travel dollars to field and site travel.
2000	1 Polycom model sound station EX Conference Phone	$0.7	R8's RA and DRA uses teleconference on various weekly and monthly meetings. These meetings range from State Director, Tribal and AA/Deputy AA meetings. This has resulted in travel savings for EPA as well as our state/tribal partners.
2003	1 TV Monitor for ARA's Office	$0.5	YMC Negotiations - involved 2 Montana Office employees; 2 Regional employees; and PRP. Saved travel expenses for both Montana and Region to meet; total travel savings of $5,400.00
2003	AV Equipment for Teleconferencing in Conference Center	$0.5	HQS National Tribal Conference - involved 1 Montana Office employee travel to Washington, D.C.; total travel savings of $1,900.00
2003	4 TV Monitors for Teleconferencing in Conference Center	$1.6	Rhodia Negotiations - involved 3 Montana Office employees and 2 regional employees to meet in SLC; total travel savings of $2,800.00
2004	Sound System for Teleconferencing in the Conference Center	$32.5	Indian Health Service - involved 4 Montana Office employees; saved travel funds to travel to Billings; total travel savings of $900.00
2004	Wireless Microphones for Teleconferencing in the Conference Center	$1.3	Contracts Management refresher - 26 employees in the Montana Office are required to take this course. In the past 2 years it has been presented via videoconference in several sessions, otherwise we would have to travel to Denver. Total travel savings is $33,800.00
2005	Microphones for Conference Center	$0.6	UIC Planning meeting - 1 employee from Montana Office to Denver; total travel savings of $1,600.

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
2004	Tandberg 3000 MXP Video w/equipment	$33.0	UST Planning meeting - 1 employee from Montana Office to Denver; total travel savings of $1,600
2004	Radvision Gateway BRI/IP w/equipment	$85.8	Felix Fletches had a meeting with a consultant instead of having the consultant travel to the Region. Total travel savings is $7,000
2005	Projector Lamps	$3.7	
2005	1 Tandberg 6000 Dual Monitor System: 2 Tandberg 2500 dual monitor systems: 1 Tandberg 1000	$63.6	
	REGION 9		
2006	Videoconferencing System	$21.1	Equipment is for Continuity of Operations (COOP) for Regional Office - limited impact on travel or program budget.
2006	Display Unit, Audio	$76.3	
2006	Display System & Inputs	$14.6	Equipment supports the warehouse in San Francisco. Limited impact on EPA Travel or program budget
2006	34-Inch Multi-Media Display	$6.0	Equipment provides enhanced teleconference capability in the Los Angeles Field Office, enabling an EPA presence to better accomplish EPA missions in the Southern California geographic area. LA Field Offices are able to remain connected w/HQ and Regional Program Managers through use of this equipment.
2006	Documentation, Training and Warranty	$4.8	
2006	Power Series Cart	$4.2	
2006	Polycom Power 9800 System	$32.0	
	REGION 10		
2003	Polycom ViewStation	$0.3	Undetermined impact from utilization
2005	Tandberg 6000 MXP	$26.0	No impact -- equipment has not yet been utilized

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
Office of the Administrator			
2006	Video Teleconferencing Capabilities (2 Rooms)	$432.0	Allows the administrator and deputy administrator to hold weekly meetings will the 10 regional administrators. Any one Monday meeting would cost in excess of $50K for travel and expenses
Office of International Affairs			
Not Applicable			
Office of Administration and Resources Management			
2004	Tandberg Director	$66.0	Security Management Division: This equipment has been used to initiate and receive 68 televideo conference calls, by more than 8 differenct program offices at Hqtrs since procurement. Although it is impossible to place an exact dollar amount on cost savings to the agency, I conservatively estimate that if the average 1 day travel costs for an employee is $700, and we have had more than 200 participants during these conference calls, the average no. of participants being 3, I estimate that the unit has saved more than $142, 800 in Agency travel dollars since procurement and of that figure more than 75% was savings to SMD.
Office of the Chief Financial Officer			
2005	3 Tanbergs (Desktop Video Conferencing)	$22.9	*Estimated $2.0K yearly savings (2 trips/3persons). Equipment provides face-to-face communication for team members located in different geographic locations.
Office of Environmental Information			
2001	4 Polycome Conference Room Units (OTOP)	$80.0	OTOP personnel work from two locations, Washington DC and Research Triangle Park, NC. Tandberg units allow OTOP employees to interact, meet with customers and contractors, and oversee projects with minimal travel. The units have reduced travel costs to EPA and improved meeting effectiveness through virtual participation of presenters and some attendees.
2003	Clarity LCD Rear Projector	$25.8	To create a videoteleconferencing room that can be used by OEI.
2003	3M Wall Display	$9.3	
2003	AEI 5" LCD Monitor	$0.3	
2003	3M 15" Monitor	$1.0	

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
2003	Autopatch Modular 24x12 w/Stereo	$37.3	To create a videoteleconferencing room that can be used by OEI.
2003	Autopatch Modular 32x32 Composite Video w/Stereo	$15.3	
2003	Extron Tilt-up Hideaway Surface Access I / F	$0.6	
2003	Extron Extender AAP Black	$0.3	
2003	Extron CVE QI AAB Wall Plate	$0.2	
2003	Altinex Interface-Intra-White	$3.9	
2003	Altinex Intera Series Composite Video / Stereo	$3.9	
2003	Altinex 45 Watt Power Supply	$1.6	
2003	Altinex Interface Cable W/ Audio-6'	$0.6	
2003	Altinex Interface Cable W/Audio 12'	$0.5	
2003	Boeckeler PVI-X90D	$4.1	
2003	VSI Tandberg 6000 Portable / First Year Rapid Response	$18.4	
2003	VSIG Quad NT-1	$0.5	
2003	Visual System Integration Group Wave 2 Camera NTSC	$2.8	
2003	Visual System Integration Group Wave 2 Camera NTSC - First Year	$0.2	
2003	Contemp Research Stereo TV Tuner / RS-232	$2.6	
2003	JVC Hi-Fi VCR	$2.6	
2003	Sony DVD Player	$0.1	
2003	Jupiter F950-4HCV-512M-4 High Resolution Display Channels	$16.4	
2003	Wolfvision 1-CCD Progressive Scan Camera	$2.7	
2003	AMX Modero 12 Touch Panel	$5.0	
2003	AMX Modero Color Video 12" Flush Mount - Black	$5.5	
2003	AMX Wireless Base for 12" Modero Series	$1.3	
2003	AMX IEEE 80211b Wireless Interface Card	$0.2	
2003	AMX Battery Pack for 12" Modero Series Tabletop Panel	$0.4	
2003	AMX Power Supply	$0.9	
2003	AMX Integrated Master / NXI	$2.2	
2003	Audio Technica Surface Mounted Cardioid Microphone - Black	$2.0	

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
2003	Audio Technica Lectum Microphone	$0.2	To create a videoteleconferencing room that can be used by OEI.
2003	Audio Technica Shock Mount	$0.1	
2003	Gentner XAP800 Echo Canceller / Matrix Mixer	$9.3	
2003	Gentner XAP-TH1 Telephone Hybrid	$0.8	
2003	Peavy Single Channel Industrial Power Amp	$0.3	
2003	Peavy Dual Channel Power Amplifier	$0.3	
2003	JBL Systems Control 24CT Micro Plus	$0.4	
2003	TOA Interior Design Speaker	$0.6	
2003	Middle Atlantic KD Multi-Bay Rack	$0.4	
2003	Middle Atlantic Split Rear Rail for Slim 5 Series 5-21 Rack	$0.1	
2003	Middle Atlantic Set of 4 Casters, 2 Locking	$0.1	
2003	Middle Atlantic Cable Chase	$0.1	
2003	New Frontier 1RU 9 Outlet 15 Amp	$0.9	
2003	New Frontier Power Suppression	$0.5	
2003	KSI EL Statesman Custom Lectern NO GSA Schedule	$5.2	
2003	Wireless Computing Wireless Keyboard / Mouse	$0.4	
2003	AMX Battery Charger for NXT-BP Batteries	$1.0	
2004	19 Tandberg T100 Conferencing Units (OTOP)	$113.8	
2004	2 Tandberg Conference Room Units (OTOP)	$47.0	
2005	1 Tandberg Conference Room unit (OIAA)	$11.2	
2005	2 Tanberg Video Conferencing Units (OIC)	$2.0	
2005	1 Tandberg Conference Room Unit (OTOP)	$6.0	

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
2006	2 Tandberg T100 conferencing units (OIAA)	$12.0	OIAA has staff in both Washington, DC and RTP, NC. To facilitate communications between OIAA employees, OEI offices, and customers in both locations, OIAA has invested in Tandberg units which provide face-to-face contact between geographically separated locations.
2006	4 Tanberg Video Conferencing Units (OIC)	$4.0	OIC deals with international, federal, state, local, and tribal partners in various locations around the world. Having Tanbergs allows OIC to decrease meeting and travel expenses, involve partner from remote locations, improve individual understanding with eye-to-eye contact, and provide consistent and timely information.
2006	2 Tandberg T100 Conferencing Units (OIAA)	$12.0	
Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances			
2000	Video Conference/Multimedia	$25.0	Video teleconferencing system is used on average once per quarter. This equipment is part of a complete multimedia system that is used routinely for briefings and other non-video teleconferencing activities. As this is incorporated into standard operations the impact is difficult to gauge.
2005	Video Conference/Multimedia	$38.4	This system is currently coming on line. It is intended to enhance regional senior management and workgroup conference calls. Hopefully it will minimize the requirement for senior management trips to HQ.

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
	Office of Research and Development		
2004	Polycom Viewstation EX and IP and Multipoint Plus	$26.3	
2004	Samsung 50" HD Plasma Display	$5.2	
2004	Speakers	$0.2	
2004	Ceiling Mount	$0.4	
2003	iPower VC system 3 systems for Cinc., RTP, & DC	$50.2	
2005	Video Conferencing	$8.4	
2005	Tandberg 1500 MXP Video Conferencing unit	$25.0	
2001	Data projector, Ceiling Bracket, Ceiling Plate	$20.9	
2001	Samsung Video Visualizer	$22.6	
2006	Polycom 7800 Video Conferencing System	$13.0	
2006	Polycom Viewstation include Monitor and microphones	$6.0	
2006	Polycom 7800 Video Conferencing System	$13.0	
2006	Polycom FX Video Teleconferencing System	$12.0	
2004	Polycom View Station	$9.9	
2004	Polycom, Viscal Concert FX for VS4000	$1.5	
2004	Exview Color Camera	$1.1	
2004	Panasonic Flat Panel Plasma TV	$12.3	
2001	15 complete PictureTel 970 units	$509.8	
2002	PictureTel 970 with 4 ISDN lines	$18.2	
2005	Tandberg 1500 MXP Video Conferencing Unit	$46.1	
2006	Tandberg 1500 MXP Video Conferencing Unit for AA Conf. Room	$77.7	

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
Office of Air and Radiation			
2006	Video Conferencing Equipment (3 locations)	$63.0	Video conferencing technology has provided relief for Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) Office of Radiation and Indoor Air (ORIA) by reducing some of our travel costs so we do not go over our travel ceiling which has been straightlined for the past several years. The purchase of this equipment outfitted three locations (headquarters and 2 labs) for ORIA.
2003	Video conferencing Equipment-(OTAQ)	$11.0	The purchase of the next four video conferencing units outfitted two headquarters offices and two offices at the lab in Ann Arbor, MI. Many internal meetings of OAR Office of Transportation and Air Quality offices are now being held with this equipment without incurring travel costs.
2005	Video conferencing Equipment (OTAQ)	$10.2	
2005	Video conferencing Equipment (OTAQ)	$13.4	
2001	Video conferencing Equipment (OTAQ)	$12.2	
Office of Water			
2004	Video equipment for 2369B East, including: projection screen; projector mount; projector; video switcher; touch screen; loudspeakers; volume control; amplifier; and digital equalizer	$27.5	Equipment has reduced the need for personnel in regions and satellite offices to travel to Washington, DC for various meetings.
2002	Polycom iPower	$29.3	Communication with Cincinnati office is more efficient
2004	Tandberg	$12.3	Communication with Cincinnati office is more efficient

Year of Expense	Type of Equipment	Cost	Impact Equipment Purchase has had on EPA Travel and Program Budget
Office of Inspector General			
2005	Video Teleconferencing	$246.6	Due in part to the use of video conferencing, the OIG's travel costs declined from FY 2004 to FY 2005, and are expected to remain level in FY 2006.
Office of General Counsel			
Not Applicable			
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response			
2005	Polycom video 3 units	$31.3	Used for meetings between the different ERT offices.
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance			
Not Applicable			

U.S. EPA Total FY 2000 - 2006 Teleconferencing Equipment **$3,466.8**

Question 11 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Off-Site Internal Staff Meeting Costs FY 2005

(Dollars in Thousands)

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
		REGION 1		
PREP-The Big Drink	PREP Exercise	West Boylston, MA	17	$0.9
Level A Exercise	Exercise	West Warwick, RI	11	$0.0
Level A Exercise	Exercise	Stow, MA	23	$0.2
WMD Sample SOP	Training	Wilmington, MA	13	$0.0
Level A Exercise	Exercise	East Lyme, CT	12	$3.0
Level A Exercise	Exercise	Stow, MA	13	$0.0
Brownfields All Grantee Workshop	Training, Information Exchange	Sturbridge, MA	15	$25.4
Regional Site Assessment Conference	Planning, Training, Information Exchange	Springfield, VT	11	$3.5
OES/ORC Legal Staff Office Retreat	Discussion of Legal Practice Issues at EPA Region 1	Natick, MA	40	$0.4
R1/State Planning Meeting for Enforcement & Compliance Assistance	Planning	Worcester, MA	43	$3.5
OES Managers Retreat	Retreat	Lexington, MA	10	$0.0
A&P2 retreat	Office Retreat	Leominster, MA	25	$0.6
NE Environmental Summit	Training & Conference for Northeast States & EPA Regions 1 & 2	Providence, RI	17	$21.1
State/Federal Innovations Workgroup	Planning	Leominster, MA	10	$0.6
Toxics, Pesticides and Federal Programs Unit Retreat	Planning	Brookline, MA	10	$0.0
Inspectors' Retreat	Planning	Waltham, MA	50	$0.2
ARA Quarterly Meeting	Internal Business - Planning and Policy	San Francisco, CA	52	$46.6
ARA Quarterly Meeting	Internal Business - Planning and Policy	Boston, MA	37	$35.4
C/B 101 Training	Training	Aberdeen, MD	20	$0.1

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
REGION 2				
Senior Management Retreat	Retreat	West Point, NY	18	$5.9
EPA Annual Trial Advocacy	Training	Boulder, CO	32	$27.6
NE Summit	Retreat	Groton, CT	18	$14.3
REGION 3				
WCMD Mgmt Retreat	Planning	Avalon, NJ	12	$2.2
Green Highways Forum	Planning and Developing the Framework for the Green Highways initiative	College Park, MD	20	$60.0
Watersheds & Wetlands Workshop	Status of Science	Atlantic City, NJ	14	$2.0
VA Performance Partnership Meeting	Joint Priorities Discussion with the VA Dept. of Env. Quality	Washington, DC	14	$2.8
EAID Managers & Team Leaders Retreat	Retreat to discuss FTE, budgets, work plans and flight plans	Avalon, NJ	20	$2.8
General Remedial Section Retreat	Planning/Training	Bowman's Hill, PA	11	$0.2
State Secretaries Mtg	Planning	Annapolis, MD	24	$11.0
Air Director's Meeting	Annual Planning	Lewes, DE	15	$0.4
REGION 4				
OPM Managers/Supervisor	Planning Session	Greensboro, GA	15	$11.3
Sr. Resources Mgmt. Acquisition Council	Meeting	Savannah, GA	10	$1.5
SESD Fall Management	Planning Session	Greensboro, GA	16	$7.1
OPM All Hands	Planning, Training	Atlanta, GA	150	$6.2
OPM Managers/Supervisor	Planning Session	Atlanta, GA	30	$5.9
OPM Managers/Supervisor	Planning Session	Helen, GA	11	$3.7
Human Capital Management	Training, Planning	Atlanta, GA	16	$8.9
National Grants Management	Training, Conference	Jacksonville, FL	22	$13.0
Environmental Information Services Branch	Planning Session	Norcross, GA	21	$0.0
Environmental Information Services Branch	Training	Cartersville, GA	25	$1.2
American Bar Association of Section Environmental Energy and Resources	Training	Atlanta, GA	42	$4.6
Enforcement and Compliance Planning and Analysis Branch	Planning Meeting	Atlanta, GA	20	$0.2

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Pesticides & Toxic Substances Branch Meeting	Training, Planning	Atlanta, GA	40	$1.6
Toxic Substances Section	Training, Planning	Atlanta, GA	20	$0.3
Air Division All Hands Offsite	Meeting	Atlanta, GA	100	$2.6
SESD Spring Management	Planning Session	Greensboro, GA	16	$7.1
Water Division All Hands	Planning Session	Atlanta, GA	100	$0.3
Waste Division Managers	Meeting	Greensboro, GA	> 25	$1.1
State Directors' Meeting	Meeting	Asheville, NC	> 25	$2.4
Superfund Enforcement Information Mgmt. Branch	Training, Planning	Mableton, GA	30	$1.4
REGION 5				
SWiMS	Technical Training	Chicago, IL	43	$11.7
Great Lakes Legacy Act Planning Meeting	Annual planning meeting	Utica, IL	11	$2.8
REGION 6				
Division End of Yr Meeting	Planning Meeting	Dallas, TX	150	$0.8
Div Supervisors Retreat	Development Training/			
	Planning Meeting	Dallas, TX	20	$5.0
Section Retreat	Planning Retreat	Dallas, TX	14	$0.0
Pesticides Meetings	Planning Meetings	Dallas, TX	14	$0.0
5 States and EPA Region 6 meeting on Pesticides Performance Measures	Generate Program Performance Measures	Dallas, TX	13	$0.0
Air Inspectors Wkshp	Training	Oklahoma City, OK	10	$0.0
TCEQ State Planning	Planning	Waco, TX	10	$0.0
Air Inspectors Wkshp	Training	Oklahoma City, OK	10	$0.0
RCRA Insp Workshop	Training	San Antonio, TX	10	$0.0
NPDES Insp Workshop	Training	Albuquerque, NM	10	$0.0
OECA SEM Meeting	Planning & High level program discussions	Washington, DC	60	$0.0
LDEQ FY2006 Planning Meeting	Planning & Coordination	Baton Rouge, LA	60	$0.0
NMED FY2006 Planning Meeting	Planning & Coordination	Santa Fe, NM	60	$0.0
ICIS Power User Training	Training	Washington, DC	60	$0.0
OECA SEM Meeting	Planning & High level program discussions	Washington, DC	60	$0.0
GIS Workgroup	Training, Info exchange	Winter park, CO	50	$0.0

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Nat'l NPDES	Meeting	Chicago, IL	40	$0.0
NPDES Nat'l Prog.	Meeting	San Diego, CA	40	$0.0
PCS Steering Comm.	Meeting	Washington, DC	40	$0.0
ICIS Conf	Meeting	Washington, DC	40	$0.0
PCS Nat'l Mtg	Meeting	Fairfax County, VA	50	$0.0
OECA Conf/Wkshp	Meeting	Washington, DC	60	$0.0
R6 Biosolids Present.	Meeting	Washington, DC	35	$0.0
CAFO Insp Tng Wkshp	Meeting	Oklahoma City, OK	20	$0.0
CAFO Insp Tng Wkshp	Meeting	Oklahoma City, OK	20	$0.0
Nat'l PWS Conf	Meeting	Boulder, CO	50	$0.0
Environmental Summit	Meeting/Training	Chicago, IL	100+	$0.0
Laboratory Retreat	Information Exchange	Houston, TX	15	$0.3
Branch Retreat	Retreat	Clear Lake, TX	32	$0.3
6MD Division Retreat	Team Building	Fort Worth, TX	90	$0.9
Regional Comptroller/Financial Management Officer Winter Meeting	Financial Workshop	New Orleans, LA	34	$33.4
Nat'l Civil Right EEO Conf.	Conference	Miami, FL	12	$10.1
RTOC Summit		Dallas, TX	20	$69.0
RTOC		Dallas, TX	25	$0.0
Div Retreat-Dep Rec Ctr	Retreat	Dallas, TX	100	$0.0
Program Planning	R6 & TCEQ Staff Planning Meeting	Austin, TX	14	$4.0
Division Retreat	Team Building	Dallas, TX	75	$0.0
Section Retreat	Planning Retreat	Dallas, TX	13	$0.0
Division Retreat	Retreat	Dallas, TX	150	$0.0
Branch Retreat	Planning Retreat	Tyler, TX	22	$0.0
	REGION 7			
Air Enforcement Managers Meeting	Discuss Policies & Strategies	Boston, MA	23	$28.7
Tanks & Oil Branch Retreat	Retreat	Kansas City, KS	14	$0.0
RCRA Enforcement Managers Meeting	Planning	Kansas City, MO	35	$20.2
Air Branch Team Meeting	Training/Planning	Kansas City, KS	17	$0.9
ARTD Branch Chiefs' Retreat	Training/Planning	Kansas City, MO	11	$0.4
WWPD/WENF Branch Retreat	Retreat/Planning for FY06	Parkville, MO	16	$0.1
Human Resource Office Retreat	Retreat	Kansas City, MO	16	$0.6

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
REGION 8				
EPA National GIS Workgroup	National Workgroup Training, Planning, Information Sharing	Winter Park, CO	30	$18.8
Region 8 UIC Managers Meeting	Planning	Casper, WY	11	$4.7
Region 8 TMS Leadership Team	Retreat & Planning	Denver, CO	15	$4.3
Creativity Lab	Training	Denver, CO	14	$4.9
REGION 9				
MLDP Class	Training	San Francisco, CA	20	$1.0
MLDP Class	Training	San Francisco, CA	19	$1.0
Career Power Class	Training	San Francisco, CA	27	$1.0
Brownfield Workshop	Workshop for Brownfield Grantees	San Francisco, CA	20	$8.2
Superfund Managers Retreat	Discuss Regional and National Issues	Pescadero, CA	19	$6.0
RCRA Forum	Planning Conference	South Lake Tahoe, NV	15	$8.7
UST-All Sates Meeting	Training/Planning	San Francisco, CA	10	$1.7
RCRA Division Directors Meeting	Planning Meeting	San Francisco, CA	40	$10.5
Pesticides Office Retreat	Planning	Oakland, CA	16	$0.0
Superfund Directors Annual Meeting	Planning	San Francisco, CA	73	$0.0
Permanent Relocation	Training	San Francisco, CA	11	$0.0
Advanced Inspector	Training	San Francisco, CA	18	$0.0
REGION 10				
(10A) Executive Team Retreat	Retreat	Union, WA	17	$2.0
(10K) GAU Retreat	Retreat	Union, WA	18	$8.0
(10K) OMP Retreat	Retreat	Union, WA	18	$9.0
(10B) Unit Retreat/FDAPU	Retreat/Planning	Seattle, WA	20	$1.6
(10B) RCRA Div Dir Mtg	Planning	Seattle, WA	65	$67.6
(10G) Oil/Gas Sector Retreat	Retreat	Kenai/Soldotna, AK	18	$17.6
(10J) Bacon Mansion	Planning	Seattle, WA	12	$0.5
(10M) GPU Unit Retreat	Retreat/Planning	Seattle, WA	13	$4.2
(10M) WRU Unit Retreat	Retreat/Planning	Seattle, WA	17	$2.6
(10M) Mining Team Retreat	Retreat/Planning	Seattle, WA	23	$17.8

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
(10N) Spring OSC Training	Training	Seattle, WA	22	$6.8
(10N) Unit Retreat	Training	Seattle, WA	14	$0.3
(10P) Technical Support Unit Retreat	Retreat	Seattle, WA	14	$0.0
(10P) OEA All-Staff - Lab Hosted	Retreat	Manchester, WA	40	$0.3
(10T) MS Word Level 1	Training	Boise, ID	11	$0.9
(10T) MS Word Level 2	Training	Boise, ID	11	$0.9
(10T) MS Excel/PowerPoint	Training	Boise, ID	11	$0.9
(10T) IOO Retreat	Planning	Boise, ID	23	$0.8
(10T) Leadership Training	Training	Boise, ID	14	$1.7
(10T) USDA Grad School Pre-retirement Class	Training	Boise, ID	17	$5.7
(10Z) Region 10 Innovation Council	Retreat	Bainbridge Island, WA	15	$0.2
Office of the Administrator				
Dose - Response for Noncancer Health Effects:	Workshop	Oakland, CA	5	$26.2
Benefits Transfer and Valuation Databases: Are We Heading in the Right Direction?	Technical Workshop	Washington, DC	19	$51.4
Economic Impact of Aquatic Invasive Species (co-sponsored by Office of Water)	Information Exchange	Washington, DC	29	$57.9
Innovation Action Council	Meeting	Washington, DC	80	$10.3
NCEI Office Retreat	Retreat / Training	Washington, DC	90	$3.1
Innovation Action Council Meeting 6/05	Meeting	Washington, DC	80	$12.9
Innovation Action Council Staff Follow-up Meeting	Meeting	Washington, DC	36	$9.1
Engaged Thoughtware Training for Reg. 2 11/05	Training	New York, NY	75	$6.3
Small Business Regional Liaison Meeting	Annual Meeting	Washington, DC	20	$21.0
Sector Strategies Retreat	Develop strategic plan and operating plan for coming year.	St. Michaels, MD	12	$4.0
Sector Strategies Training	Team Building and enhanced productivity approaches	Washington, DC	12	$0.5
Sector Strategies Air Issues Meeting	Meeting	Washington, DC	20	$0.5

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Performance Track Divisional Retreat	Retreat	St. Michaels, MD	20	$9.0
OECD Conference on Environmental Policy and the Private Firm	Conference	Washington, DC	20	$11.0
OSDBU's 4th Annual EPA/State/Tribal Conference	Information Exchange	San Antonio, Texas	10	$63.3
SAB Staff Office Retreat	Retreat	St. Michaels, MD	19	$12.9
Office of International Affairs				
US / Mexico Border 2012 National Coordinators Meeting	Public Meeting	Tucson, Arizona	75	$106.8
Senior Management Retreat	Retreat	Port Republic, MD	14	$10.0
EPA International Regional Coordinators Meeting	Information Exchange	Washington DC	12	$5.2
Office of Administration and Resources Management				
EPA Grant Seminar Non-Profit (Open to Public)	Training	Washington, DC	30	$23.5
Grants Management Officers (GMO) Meeting	General Meeting	Washington, DC	30	$25.4
Grants Management Officers (GMO) Meeting	General Meeting	Las Vegas, NV	30	$35.3
HRC	Planning	Philadelphia, PA	48	$30.1
HRC	Planning	Las Vegas, NV	55	$32.7
HRO	Planning	Denver, CO	51	$26.1
NPC	Partnership and Relations	Washington, DC	70	$32.0
EIP Mid-Cycle Conf.	Training/Retreat	Los Angeles, CA	40	$40.0
EIP Interview Conf.	Program Interviews	Washington, DC	100	$71.0
SES Mtg.	Planning	Washington, DC	375	$42.4
Office of the Chief Financial Officer				
FY 07 Planning Meeting	Planning	Washington, DC	50	$0.5
OPAA Planning Meeting	Retreat	Washington, DC	35	$0.6
WCF Training Conf.	Training	Washington, DC	120	$28.7
WCF Off-Site	Planning	Richmond, VA	13	$5.9
Regional Technical Conf.	Training	Las Vegas, NV	95	$27.8
Annual Budget Forum	Planning	Washington, DC	90	$20.8

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Office of Environmental Information				
OTOP Managers' Meeting	Meetings	Richmond, VA	22	$5.4
Environmental Information Symposium	Training Conference	Las Vegas, NV	307	$352.3
TRI Annual Training Conference	Training Conference	Washington, DC	84	$128.6
OTOP Managers' Meeting	Meetings	Richmond, VA	16	$4.1
OEI National Program Manager Meeting	Meeting	Atlanta, GA	40	$33.7
OTOP Managers' Meeting	Meeting	Richmond, VA	13	$3.4
OTOP Managers' Meeting	Meeting	Richmond, VA	13	$3.4
IT Security and Operations Conference	Training Conference	Atlanta, GA	232	$325.2
Applied Applications and Analysis Workshop	Training Conference	Solomon's Island, MD	142	$178.8
OIC Managers' Retreat	Retreat	Richmond, VA	14	$5.5
Locational Improvement Initiative	Meeting	Warrenton, VA	20	$6.0
IT Contractor Forum	Information Exchange	Washington, DC	59	$40.0
CStD Retreat	Division Retreat	Ashburn, VA	49	$11.5
ITPPD "High Performing Organization" Followup	Training	Arlington, VA	33	$5.1
OIC Managers' Retreat	Retreat	Shepherdstown, WV	14	$3.9
OTOP Managers' Meeting	Meeting	Richmond, VA	23	$5.7
TRI Annual Training Conference	Training Conference	Washington, DC	78	$130.5
Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances				
Senior Manager's Semi-Annual Planning Meeting	Planning	Solomon's, MD	25	$7.2
Senior Manager's Semi-Annual Planning Meeting	Planning	Hagerstown, MD	20	$5.9
SDSB Planning and Training Meeting	Training and Planning	Solomon's, MD	16	$3.5
CSCSB Planning and Training Meeting	Training and Planning	Dover, DE	18	$6.1
OPPTS Regional Division Directors Meeting	Planning Meeting	Baltimore, MD	30	$30.8
Office of Research and Development				
National Center for Environmental Assessment - All Scientists Planning Meeting	Planning	Marriot Hotel -- Cincinnati, OH	26	$4.1
National Homeland Security Research Center Management Retreat	Planning	Lexington, KY	24	$6.3
National Homeland Security Research Center	Organizational Development	Mt. Sterling, OH	40	$22.0
Edgewood Chemical Biological Center Program Review	Planning	Washington, DC	12	$12.0
National Homeland Security Threat and Consequence Assessment Division Program Planning Meeting	Planning	Cincinnati, OH	12	$59.0

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
National Homeland Security Research Center Training on Chemical & Warfare Detection & Analysis for EPA scientific guidance incident responders	Training	Washington DC	30	$15.0
National Center for Environmental Research Planning Meeting	Planning	Washington, DC	60	$3.0
Human Exposure and Atmospheric Sciences Strategic Planning Meeting	Planning	RTP, NC	50	$11.0
National Environmental Research Lab Program Operations Staff	Organizational Development	Cincinnati, OH	10	$4.7
National Environmental Research Lab Strategic Planning Meeting	Planning	Cincinnati, OH	20	$1.4
National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory Strategic Planning Session	Plan future research programs of work	Corvallis, Oregon	30	$4.2
National Risk Management Research Laboratory Multi Year Plan	Planning	Cincinnati, OH	50	$2.5
Water Quality Management Branch Drinking Water Multi Year Plan	Planning	Cincinnati, OH	17	$1.2
National Risk Management Research Laboratory Senior Management	Training & Planning	Loveland, OH	20	$10.3
National Risk Management Research Laboratory Senior Management	Training & Planning	Covington, KY	20	$9.9
Integrated Services Staff Meeting	Reorganization	Arlington, VA	39	$4.2
Integrated Services Staff Meeting	Reorganization	Washington, DC	18	$2.9
Resource Planning and Execution Staff	Organizational Development	Baltimore, MD	25	$35.5
Total Cost of Ownership Cincinnati Service Desk	Planning	Cincinnati, OH	20	$4.1
Communications/Web meeting	Planning	Narragansett	18	$33.0

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Office of Air and Radiation				
Climate Change Division	Training	Harbourtowne, Maryland	50	$0.0
Stratospheric Protection Division	Training	Harbourtowne, Maryland	25	$0.0
Clean Air Markets Division	Training	Berkley Springs, WVA	50	$0.0
CAIR/CAMR Implementation Meeting	Information Exchange	Washington, DC	40	$0.0
OAQPS OD Retreat	Information Exchange	Chapel Hill, NC	30	$0.0
OTAQ Senior Management Meeting	Retreat	Washington, DC	12	$0.0
OTAQ Divisional All Hands Meeting	Information Exchange	Ann Arbor, MI	50	$0.0
Office of Water				
Water Careers Council Meeting	Planning	George Washington University, Marvin Center, Washington, DC	19	$6.5
Water Careers Leadership Training	Training	Fish & Wildlife Service NCTC, Shepherdstown, WV	30	$31.4
Water Division Directors Meeting	Planning	Philadelphia, PA	50	$17.5
Mun Asst Branch Retreat	Retreat	OPM Campus in Charlottesville, VA	12	$24.9
Municipal Support Div.	Retreat	Hotel Washington, Washington, DC	55	$5.4
National Biosolids Conf	Meeting/Training	Potomac, MD	25	$89.0
SRF Coordinator's Meeting *	Planning/Training	Denver, CO	30	$22.0
Special Appropriations Act Projects Coordinator's Meeting	Planning/Training	Washington, DC	30	$18.0
WPD Branch Chief Meeting	Planning	San Diego, CA	25	$32.5
OWM Retreat	Retreat	St. Michaels, MD	15	$1.9
GOM Alliance	Planning	New Orleans, LA	11	$18.0
Mun Asst Branch Retreat	Retreat	OPM Campus in Charlottesville VA	12	$24.9
Municipal Support Div.	Retreat	Hotel Washington, Washington, DC	55	$5.4
National Biosolids Conf	Meeting/Training	Potomac, MD	25	$89.0
SRF Coordinator's Meeting *	Planning/Training	Denver, CO	30	$22.0

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Special Appropriations Act Projects Coordinator's Meeting	Planning/Training	Washington, DC	30	$18.0
WPD Branch Chief Meeting	Planning	San Diego, CA	25	$32.5
OWM Retreat	Retreat	St. Michaels, MD	15	$1.9
SRA Teambuilding-Rusty	Retreat	Virginia	18	$0.0
RMS Retreat	Retreat	Ballston Commons, VA	12	$6.5
Management Retreat	Planning session	Washington, DC	16	$0.9
UIC	Branch Chiefs	Washington, DC	30	$17.5
SDWA	Branch Chiefs	Washington, DC	81	$17.4
Tech Transfer and Strategic Workshop	Technical workshop	Shepherdstown, WV	120	$36.0
PCRMS Workplan Strategy Meeting	Planning	Washington, DC	16	$1.0
TMDL Coordinators' Workshop	Planning/Training	Washington, DC	50	$23.0
Watershed Branch Retreat/Training	Planning/Training	Cambridge, MD	25	$6.5
Branch Work planning	Planning	Lockheed Martin Office, Arlington, VA	15	$0.0
Tech Transfer and Strategic Workshop	Technical workshop	Shepherdstown, WV	42	$5.1
Wetlands Division Workshop	Training and planning	St. Michaels, MD	20	$6.0
HECD Retreat	Planning Retreat	Potomac, MD	40	$260.2
Water Quality Standards	Policy & Implementation Coordination	Shirlington, VA	44	$15.6
Water Quality Standards Branch	Planning Retreat	Washington, DC	27	$0.5
Standards & Health Protection Division	Reorganization Retreat	Washington, DC	48	$0.5
Health Protection & Modeling Branch	Planning Retreat	Washington, DC	16	$1.0
EAD Retreat	Reorganization Retreat	Washington, DC	35	$3.8
OST Management Retreat	Planning Retreat	Shepherdstown,WV	25	$24.9

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Office of Inspector General				
New Employee Orientation	Training	Washington, DC	57	$49.5
Tactical & Impact Weapons Training	Training	Dallas, TX	10	$6.9
Practical Kinesic Interviewing & Interrogation Training	Training	Williamsburg, VA	36	$61.5
Project Management Training	Training	Annapolis, MD	24	$24.6
Project Management Training	Training	Chicago, IL	27	$44.0
Project Management Training	Training	Baltimore, MD	28	$28.5
Project Management Training	Training	Baltimore, MD	35	$35.6
Office of General Counsel				
National Indian Law Workgroup	Meeting	Santa Fe, NM	35	$1.5
Office of Regional Counsel	Meeting	Santa Fe, NM	30	$1.5
National Indian Law Workgroup	Meeting	Santa Fe, NM	35	$2.3
National Counseling Attorneys	Meeting/Training	Washington, DC	80	$31.8
OGC All Hands Meeting 11/3	Information Exchange	Washington, DC	192	$0.5
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response				
17th Annual National UST/LUST Conference	Educate and train federal, state & tribal UST/LUST regulators about the latest policies, etc. on managing UST/LUST programs.	Seattle, WA	18	$320.8
05 State Fund Administrators' Conference	Discuss & educate state fund administrators on cost control, claims processing, etc.	Salt Lake City, UT	7	$216.8
ASTSWMO Annual Meeting	Planning and coordination with State and Territorial solid waste management officials involved in RCRA management.	Arlington, Virginia	31	$16.3

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
ASTSWMO Mid-Year Meeting	Planning and coordination with State and Territorial solid waste management officials involved in RCRA management.	Keystone, CO	20	$51.3
ASTSWMO State Solid Waste Conference	Planning and coordination with State and Territorial solid waste management officials involved in RCRA management.	Scottsdale, AZ	11	$32.4
2005 National Corrective Action Conference	Planning and Coordination.	Denver, CO	72	$24.6
Office of Solid Waste's Permits and State Programs Division Training	Training/Retreat	Washington, DC	35	$12.0
RCRA Information Users Conference	Training	Nashville, TN	20	$65.5
Resource Conservation Challenge	Planning	Chicago	19	$16.1
RCRA Director's Meeting	Planning	Chicago	17	$23.5
NRT Co-chair Meeting	Interagency Coordination	Denver, CO	40	$50.0
Removal Mgrs Meeting	Planning	Denver, CO	20	$23.0
Removal Mgrs Meeting	Planning	New Orleans, LA	25	$35.0
Oil Mgrs Meeting	Planning	Washington, DC	17	$16.5
Production Oil Mgr. Meeting	Training	Midland, TX	24	$26.0
Oil Technical workgroup	Training	San Francisco, CA	15	$11.0
Oil Program Inspector Training	Training	Seattle, WA	22	$20.8
Oil Program Inspector Training	Training	Atlanta, GA	22	$15.0
Oil Program Inspector Training	Training	Kansas City, KS	21	$15.8
CEPP Regional Coordinators Meeting	Meeting	Washington, DC	25	$19.0
Project Officer/ Contracting Officer (PO/CO) Conference	Training	Philadelphia, PA	138	$91.3
Superfund Senior Regional Management and Acquisition Council (SRMAC) Conference	Training	Philadelphia, PA	20	$10.7

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
National Site Assessment Symposium and Training	Training / Information Sharing	Charleston, SC	64	$152.0
Collingwood Library and Museum	Retreat	Alexandria, VA	11	$0.0
FY06 Superfund Focus Forum	Planning/Informational	San Diego, California	144	$155.5
Technical Outreach Services for Communities (TOSC) Meeting	Planning & Training	Estes Park, CO	15	$27.0
Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Meeting	Meeting	San Francisco, CA	15	$25.2
Leveraging Diversity to Build High Performance Work Teams	Diversity Training	Arlington, VA	52	$6.4
Human Resources Branch	Branch Retreat	Arlington, VA	13	$4.3
National Institute of Retirement Planning	Retirement Seminar	Arlington, VA	30	$4.7
OSC Readiness Training	Five days, 33 Training courses for On Scene Coordinators in the areas of Emergency Response, Incident Management, Disaster Response, and Contract management	Phoenix, AZ	350	$320.0
NARPM Annual Training	Five days, 25 Training courses, 18 briefing sessions for Remedial Project Managers in areas of hazardous waste clean-up, including: community involvement, risk assessment, site closeout, and Contract management	Phoenix, AZ	400	$360.0
Temporary Relocation	2-day training	Atlanta, GA	20	$5.0
Superfund Academy 101	5-day Training	Los Angeles, CA	18	$13.0
Temporary Relocation	2-day Training	Atlanta, GA	20	$5.0

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Superfund Academy 101	5-day Training	Los Angeles, CA	18	$13.0
Advanced Triad Community of Practice Workshop/Strategic Partners	3-day Training	Arlington, VA (150 total attendees)	31	$23.0
Technical Support Project	3 days Planning, Technology Transfer	Sacramento, CA	65	$45.0
Third International Phytotechnologies Conference	3 days Technology Transfer, Outreach	Atlanta, GA (370 total attendees)	40	$40.0
Superfund Analytical Operations Training Conference	3-day Training	San Diego, CA (75 total attendees)	35	$22.0
OSWER Training Forum	3-day, Planning,Training	Las Vegas, NV	18	$10.0
Superfund National Notable Achievement Awards Ceremony	Employee honors, 2 hour ceremony	Arlington, VA	200	$24.0
Abandoned Mine Lands Workshop	2-day workshop with 100 experts to discuss state-of-the-practice for remediation of Abandoned Mine lands	Denver, CO	28	$40.0
Command and General Staff Training EPA-420	Training - 2 days	Los Angeles, CA	56	$110.0
Response Readiness Training	Training - 1 day	Lawrenceville, GA	13	$2.0
Response Readiness Training	Training - 1 day	Lawrenceville, GA	14	$2.0
Command and General Staff Training EPA-420	Training - 5 day	Florence, KY	30	$50.0
Operations Section Chief EPA-430	Training - 5 days	Valley Forge, PA	18	$13.0
Logistics Section Chief EPA-450	Training - 5 days	Valley Forge, PA	13	$11.0
Introductory Preliminary Assessment Training	Training - 2 days	Kansas City, KS	12	$2.0
Division/Group Supervisor EPA-339	Training - 3 days	Angola, IN	32	$17.0
Environmental Remediation Technologies	Training - 3 days	Atlanta, GA	11	$8.0
Introductory Site Inspection Training	Training - 2 days	Kansas City, KS	11	$2.0
Hazardous Material Incident Response Operations	Training - 5 days	Lee's Summit, MO	12	$8.0

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
Advanced Incident Command System	Training - 5 days	Cincinnati, OH	21	$19.0
Safety Officer EPA-404	Training - 5 days	San Francisco, CA	13	$9.0
Division/Group Supervisor EPA-339	Training - 3 days	Farmer's Branch, TX	16	$6.0
Hazardous Material Incident Response Operations	Training - 5 days	Cincinnati, OH	13	$7.0
Brownfields Nonprofit Cleanup Grantee Roundtable	Peer-to-peer information exchange and training/technical assistance to nonprofit cleanup grantees	Providence, RI	20	$16.5
Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grants & Cleanup Grants Program Meeting	Information sharing/best practices, training, and program planning	Dallas, TX	30	$18.4
State and Tribal Response Program Meeting	Information sharing/best practices, training, and program planning	San Antonio, TX	35	$25.8
Brownfields Regional Coordinators Meeting	Training and Program Planning	Washington, DC	94	$49.7
Brownfields Regional Coordinators Meeting	Training and Program Planning	Denver, CO	42	$27.3
Federal Facilities Leadership Council Conf.	EPA forum that addresses policy, enforcement, program & technical issues specific to cleanup and reuse of federal facilities.	Salt Lake City, UT	60	$550.2
Federal Facilities Leadership Council Conf.	EPA forum that addresses policy, enforcement, program & technical issues specific to cleanup and reuse of federal facilities.	Washington, DC	54	$37.3

Off-Site Meeting	Purpose of Off-Site Meeting (Training, Retreat, Planning, etc.)	Location (City, State)	Number of EPA Personnel Attending	Total Cost of EPA Off-site Meetings
National Land Revitalization Coordinators Meeting	Strategic Planning for Land Revitalization	Tampa, FL	45	$32.4
Land Revitalization Retreat	Coordinate development of Agency Land Revitalization work program and strategic approaches to ensure efficient and effective use of resources	Williamsburg, VA	11	$10.3
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance				
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) National Meeting	Technical Meeting	Dallas, TX	31	$28.0
SR. Managers	Training	Dallas, TX	65	$11.3
SR. Managers	Training	Washington, DC		$15.1
NAHFE 14th Annual Ldrshp Dve	Training			$0.7
OECA Nat'l Conference	Training	New Orleans, LA		$54.1
SR. Managers	Training			$8.9
Mgrs. Meeting	Planning	Washington, DC		$1.5
Administrative Professionals Conference	Training	Denver, CO	30	$28.4
Special Agents-in-Charge (SAC) Conference	Training	Denver, CO	34	$62.9
Senior Managers FEI Training/Retreat	Combined Training/Retreat/Planning Session	Charlottesville, VA	10	$25.5
EPA National Ag Sector Contacts Meeting	Training/Information Sharing	Denver, CO	45	$71.7
National Environmental Partnership Summit	Information Exchange	Chicago, IL	12	$17.1
NPDES Enforcement and Compliance Managers' Meeting 2005	Retreat, Planning	Boulder, CO	38	$6.9
CSO/SSO National Meeting	Retreat, Planning	Washington, DC	58	$1.0
Drinking Water Enforcement Managers' Meeting	Retreat, Planning	Boulder, CO		$7.0
U.S. EPA Total FY 2005 Internal Meeting Totals			12,890	$8,189.5