



# NAACP

September 21, 2015

Robert Cardillo, Director  
National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency  
7500 GEOINT Drive  
Springfield, Virginia 22150-7500

Subject: Proposed New Facility in the St. Louis Area

Dear Robert:

My name is Adolphus M. Pruitt, II, and I am President of the St. Louis Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I am also the 1st Vice President of the Missouri NAACP Conference of Branches.

The NAACP is well aware of the need for your agency to move its western headquarters from its outdated, Civil War era campus in South St. Louis City; and the pledged to stay in the St. Louis region. We are also aware that you are considering several locations; including one in Illinois near Scott Air Force Base, and one in St. Louis City. Retaining the NGA's 3,100 well-paying jobs, adding a \$1.6 billion project and hundreds of construction jobs in the city, keeping millions of tax dollars in state and local economies is critical; but the city location (100-acre area north of downtown) adjacent to the demolished Pruitt-Igoe housing complex will be a Game Changer for this predominately African American neighborhood.

### **Economic Forces**

Older urban areas were once the hubs of economic growth and activity, and were therefore major destinations for people in search of economic opportunity. However, the economies of many of these cities have since been eroded by complex economic transformations and shifting patterns in metropolitan development. These economic forces both racial and non-racial—are the direct result of actions, processes, or ideologies that explicitly reflect some form of racial bias. Nevertheless, they have accelerated neighborhood decline in the inner city and widened gaps in race and income between St. Louis City and its suburbs.

Ironically, policymakers have indirectly contributed to concentrated poverty in inner-city neighborhoods with decisions that have decreased the attractiveness of low-paying jobs and accelerated the relative decline in the wages of low-income workers. In particular, in the absence of an effective labor market policy, policymakers have tolerated industry practices that undermine worker security—including the erosion of benefits and the rise of involuntary part-time employment.

### **Disparate Impact**

In sum, federal government policies and decisions, even those that are not explicitly racial, have had a profound impact on inner-city neighborhoods. These impacts have been felt in many cities across the country, but they perhaps have been felt more in the older central cities of the Midwest (such as St. Louis) and Northeast—the traditional Rust Belt— where depopulated, high-poverty areas have experienced even greater problems.

### **Cultural forces**

With the departure of higher-income families, the least upwardly mobile in society—mainly low-income people of color— are left behind in our north-city neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and deteriorating physical conditions. These neighborhoods offer few jobs and typically lack basic services and amenities, such as banks, grocery stores and other retail establishments, parks, and quality transit. They also suffer from substandard schools, many with run-down physical plants. Two of the most visible indicators of neighborhood decline are abandoned buildings and vacant lots; St. Louis's Land Reutilization Authority — which takes over real estate if taxes aren't paid — counts almost 10,000 properties, mostly vacant land, in its inventory. Thousands more vacant parcels are held by private owners.

### **A symbiotic Relationship**

From the beginning, and through the decades the NGA has had an indescribable and indelible connection with those who lived, played, and worked within and just beyond its walls. The relocation of NGA out of the City will impact this City, and its population in so many ways, because NGA represents both the history and the future of the City; and particularly the north St. Louis area proposed for its relocation.

The City of St. Louis has been caught between countervailing forces that have left it and those connected to it — for more than a year — in a perpetual period of transition. While giving priority to the criteria of military value, the human impact of NGA's relocation and the possible economic, and other effects on the City and its underserved populations is a priority for the NAACP; and should not have a disparate impact on the populations we represent.

Sincerely,



Adolphus M. Pruitt, II, 1st Vice President  
NAACP Missouri State Conference of Branches, &  
President - St. Louis City Branch NAACP  
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