



ASSOCIATION OF
RESEARCH LIBRARIES

ALA American
Library
Association

April 14, 2010

The Honorable Ben Nelson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch,
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch,
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Nelson and Ranking Member Murkowski:

On behalf of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the American Library Association (ALA), we write in support of the FY2011 appropriations request of \$166,560,000 for the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). Collectively, our associations represent thousands of individuals and institutions serving communities throughout the nation, including the more than 1,200 federal depository libraries located in nearly every congressional district.

ARL is an association of 124 research libraries in North America. ARL programs and services promote equitable access to and effective use of recorded knowledge in support of teaching and research. ALA is a nonprofit educational organization of 66,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for recognizing the importance of and the need to digitize GPO's legacy collection of federal documents. The \$500,000 that was provided by Congress permits GPO to digitize and make accessible these federal resources, ensuring that future generations will be able to access this information. An additional \$500,000 in FY2011 will build on this work and make a significant amount of government information readily accessible to the American public.

GPO Salaries and Expenses

Federal Depository Library Program. We urge your full support of the FY2011 appropriation for GPO with a particular focus on the Salaries and Expenses (S&E) appropriation of \$40,911,000 for the Superintendent of Documents. The majority of the S&E funding is devoted to the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

The FDLP is responsible for the dissemination of congressional and other government publications to participating academic, research, public, federal, state and other libraries nationwide as well as thousands of others via the Internet. The FDLP is an extremely successful partnership between Congress, non-profit libraries, government agencies and the public. In return for the Government providing libraries with government publications and needed discovery tools, participating federal depository libraries (FDLs) provide technological tools, expertise and related information resources to ensure that the public has access to needed government information at no cost to the

user. The costs of providing depository library services by selective and regional libraries (those that acquire and preserve tangible federal information in perpetuity) range from \$352,680 to \$1 million per year. This represents a very significant investment, particularly in these challenging economic times. Fourteen regional FDLs are in state libraries, 33 regional FDLs are in research and academic libraries, and the remaining three are in public libraries. Most of these libraries are state-funded institutions. With an anticipated state government budget shortfall of 350 billion over the next three years, libraries are experiencing significant cutbacks in funding.

As people around the country learn how to manage during this economic downturn and face personal financial challenges, they are turning to libraries to receive a greater number of services. Members of the public depend on their library to assist with important daily tasks such as filing applications for employment, filing for unemployment benefits, and identifying needed government forms and information from government agencies.

71 percent of public libraries in the United States provide the only no-fee community access to the Internet and members of the public are taking advantage of this access to interact with the Government. In many instances, providing these services places a strain on library budgets that are already stretched, indeed, most are facing significant cutbacks. Like the GPO, in this changing environment, libraries are altering the traditional way they provide service to their patrons and are very engaged in the provision of e-services.

Importantly, S&E activities include funds for the cataloging, indexing and distribution of federal publications to federal depository libraries and other recipients as designated by law. Cataloging government publications, both print and electronic, is important as it permits users to find government information of interest. In addition to the cataloging projects, GPO also processes, catalogs and archives web-based material that GPO has harvested from other federal agencies. All of these projects require additional funding and we urge the Subcommittee to support the request for \$500,000 so that GPO can undertake these important efforts.

GPO Technological Initiatives

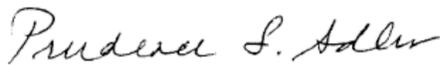
The FDLP and GPO's technological resources are vital to the dissemination and acquisition of federal government information by the public. We commend GPO for investing in technologies and systems to support enhanced access to electronic government information. This ensures that GPO is well positioned to provide needed information services in the evolving networked environment. The S&E account includes several important information technology projects that are designed to expand and improve public access to government information. Some are also designed to reduce internal GPO costs as well as improve efficiency of service to participating FDLs. We support GPO's request for \$500,000 to support Federal Depository Library Program legacy systems modernization.

We fully support GPO's continuing efforts to upgrade its technology platform. GPO's Federal Digital System (FDsys) is a digital content system that permits GPO to capture, provide access to and preserve government information from all three branches of government. Information resources from federal departments and agencies, along with

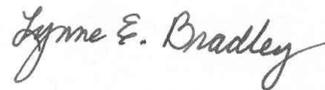
the courts, are available via GPO's technology platform and FDsys will evolve over time by incorporating new technologies that reflect changing user information needs.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and for your past support of GPO and the Federal Depository Library Program. The investment in systems and services to provide the public with government information and resources will ensure that valuable electronic government information created today will be discoverable, accessible, and preserved for future generations. We respectfully urge your strong support for Government Printing Office's FY2011 appropriations request of \$ 40,911,000 for the Superintendent of Documents. Thank you for your consideration of this request and please let us know if there is additional information that we can provide.

Sincerely,



Prudence S. Adler
Associate Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries



Lynne Bradley
Director – Office of Government
Relations
American Library Association