

September 15, 2011

Ms. Nancy Robertson
State Librarian of Michigan
Library of Michigan
702 West Kalamazoo Street
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Ms. Robertson:

This is in response to your letters of July 29, 2011, and August 4, 2011, concerning the proposal for the University of Minnesota to provide regional services for the Federal Depository Libraries in Michigan. In your letters, you specifically note the existence of current multi-state regional arrangements to support your request. While your assertion is correct, you must keep in mind that the last of the current multi-state agreements was approved by GPO almost 20 years ago. GPO has no intention of disrupting any of these preexisting multi-state regional arrangements.

From this point forward, however, in view of the fact that the language of 44 USC 1912 does not explicitly authorize multi-state regionals, we believe such arrangements should be approved by the Joint Committee on Printing under the provision of 44 USC 1914, which permits the Public Printer, with the Committee's approval, to "use any measures he considers necessary for the economical and practical implementation of this chapter." The Public Printer and I have discussed the proposal for the University of Minnesota to serve as the regional depository library for Michigan, and we agree that this particular proposal is not necessary for the economical or practical implementation of the FDLP for the reasons articulated below. Thus, the Public Printer will not be submitting this proposal to the Joint Committee on Printing.

To more than double the number of libraries for the Minnesota regional depository coordinator to oversee is not practical. Currently the University of Minnesota oversees regional responsibilities for 32 libraries (23 in Minnesota and 9 in South Dakota). The addition of 43 selective depository libraries from the state of Michigan, with no apparent increase in staffing, is not an approach that appears to be sustainable in the future. Also, the geographic distance between Michigan and Minnesota is a practical limitation that cannot be overcome by researchers needing to utilize official tangible publications currently held in the depository collection at the State Library of Michigan. Researchers wishing to use historical materials may have to leave the state to find the publications they need that have been weeded from your institution.

Additionally, in these times of tight budgets and limited funding, there does not appear to be, nor do you indicate that there will be, an increase in the budget for regional services at the University of Minnesota. Importantly also, it is unknown if there will be adequate future funding from the people of Minnesota to provide these services for depository libraries located in Michigan and South Dakota.

Further, as part of the proposed agreement, is the inclusion of discard processes where materials will be sent from the State Library of Michigan and other institutions as part of the Michigan weeding process. There are costs associated with the transport of materials from the selective depository libraries in Michigan to a scanning location to be used in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) scanning project. The CIC's scanning project involves destructive scanning and is not part of any GPO agreement. It is clear that some Federal materials, which are the property of the U.S. Government, would be transferred from one state to another as part of this project. If the parties in the Michigan/Minnesota multi-state regional decide to terminate the service agreement, GPO will not have funds or the materials to replace the publications destroyed during the CIC scanning project or otherwise discarded from the Michigan libraries during this period.

We are aware that some Federal publications from Michigan Federal Depository Library collections are being tagged for digitization and inclusion in HathiTrust. As stated above, this is not a project undertaken in partnership with GPO. Since these publications will be reformatted into electronic files that are not considered official or authentic, referrals to these resources should be made with that caveat. The official and authentic publications continue to be the print format and libraries may not rely on the electronic files as such, nor substitute the electronic files for the tangible publications. As you are currently a director of a regional depository library with publications that are official and authentic, I am sure you well understand the importance of these concerns.

Finally, the core issue associated with this proposed service arrangement is the lack of equal and equitable access for government publications for the people of Michigan. The proposal lacks any information as to what will happen to the historical collection of materials held in Michigan depository libraries. The current collections have been developed with great care and attention to building a comprehensive collection of tangible Federal publications within the state. The weeding process under the Minnesota regional is much more laissez-faire than the process in Michigan. The proposed agreement provides the mechanism by which much of this material will be discarded or weeded, relying on the University of Minnesota regional collection to serve as the regional for Michigan.

With the change in status for the Library of Michigan from a regional library to a selective, it is important to keep the depository coordinator information current. Thank you for providing me the name of Leelyn Johnson, who will be serving as the Federal depository library coordinator for the Library of Michigan. Please use the Federal Depository Library Directory, which is available at <http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp>. The login is your depository library number, and the password is your individual depository library internal password. In addition,

you may submit your revised item selection profile directly to GPO in an electronic format. Please send the file to Robin Haun-Mohamed at rhaun-mohamed@gpo.gov, or to Joseph Paskoski at jpaskoski@gpo.gov. We will upload the information on October 3, 2011, the first business day in October and the first business day that the Library of Michigan will no longer serve as regional library for the Federal Depository Library Program.

While I understand and appreciate your desire to ensure there is no break in coverage for regional services for the depository libraries in Michigan, I do not believe that the current proposal is in the best interest of the FDLP community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Alice Baish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARY ALICE BAISH
Assistant Public Printer
(Superintendent of Documents)

Copy to: The Honorable Carl Levin
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
The Honorable Gregg Harper
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
William Boarman, Public Printer of the United States