



October 19, 2011

Public Printer William J. Boarman  
Government Printing Office  
732 North Capitol Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20401-0001

Dear Public Printer Boarman,

We write as coordinators of regional depository libraries to express our deep concern over GPO's recent responses to two initiatives within the FDLP system. Given these responses, and the rejection of the 2011 Ithaka S+R report (*Modeling a Sustainable Future of the Federal Depository Library Program in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*), we do not believe that GPO recognizes the gravity of the current situation in many regional federal depository libraries, and does not appear to be making efforts to understand this situation or to creatively partner with regional libraries or groups of depository libraries to help ameliorate the situation.

In response to an extremely challenging budget situation in Michigan, the University of Minnesota Libraries and the State Library of Michigan submitted a proposal to allow the University of Minnesota to take over regional responsibilities for the 43 Michigan selectives. Minnesota already has responsibilities for South Dakota selectives. GPO did not accept the proposal. The September 15<sup>th</sup> response letter included points about distance, governance, and funding issues that we believe were addressed in the proposal.

The ASERL initiative is the second example. While we acknowledge and appreciate GPO's offer to work with ASERL on its implementation of the *Southeast Regional Guidelines of Management and Disposition of Federal Depository Library Collections*, several of the issues of concern raised in GPO's letters of July 20 and September 23 appear to us to be beyond the GPO's scope. The change in the ASERL Documents Disposition Database in early September to display a state's discards to the regional as soon as they are posted, together with the Plan's statements in Section V.4, page 8 affirming the responsibility of the regional and the selectives to consult together on collection development matters, adequately address the primacy of the regional collections. Nothing in the ASERL plan changes current policies in other stated areas of concern - no sale of documents, public access, and the requirement of

regionals to hold tangible formats. We do not understand why these issues were raised by GPO in its response. The final area of concern – oversight of the two Centers of Excellence - is not within GPO's purview since the Centers of Excellence enhance access to government information beyond the mandates of Title 44, and implementation in no way abrogates requirements of the current law.

As you know, libraries, the information delivery environment, and our users' needs are all rapidly changing. Much is in flux, but much is known about this new era. Our users expect information, including government information, to be at their fingertips via their computer or hand-held device. With 97% of the new government information available electronically via the depository system and through the Internet we are doing a good job supplying this demand for instant results. Our users also expect government and other information to be preserved for the future. With the geographically distributed system of regional and selective depository libraries we are addressing that need for printed federal government information.

What the current federal depository library program is not doing a good job of is taking advantage of technology and new collaborations to better serve our users and, at the same time, alleviate some major issues for all depository libraries, and in particular regional depository libraries. The 47 regional federal depositories attempt to have redundant collections. We know that all regionals do not have identical collections, but that's the goal. Administrators and librarians in regional libraries understand the necessity of retaining and preserving multiple, geographically distributed collections of government information, but increasingly they are also saying "but, not in my backyard. We don't have the room or funds." The recent withdrawals of the University of Nevada and the State Library of Michigan as regional federal depository libraries is probably only a bellwether if some flexibility isn't built into the depository system.

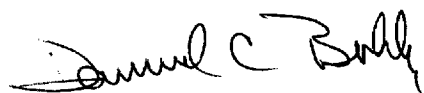
GPO's reaction to community initiated proposals (mentioned above) to creatively work within current law to address some pressing concerns is very disappointing, and seems to display a lack of enthusiasm for partnering with depository libraries in forward-looking ways. GPO's recent decision that the University of Minnesota Libraries and the State Library of Michigan proposal requires review and approval by the Joint Committee on Printing, when earlier multi-state agreements were approved as within the 44 USC 1914 is particularly distressing. The current proposal, to provide regional services to Michigan from Minnesota, seems to us quite different from the shared regional proposal addressed by the 2007 CRS opinion. We applaud the Michigan State Librarian's intention to continue to work directly with Senators of the two states to have the University of Minnesota continue its tradition of being a "regional" library meeting the information needs of the public in Minnesota as well as other states. The GPO response to the ASERL plan, and the rejection of the Ithaka S+R report, *Modeling a Sustainable Future of the Federal Depository Library*

*Program in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, seem to display a lack of enthusiasm for partnering with the community to fashion a workable future for the FDLP.

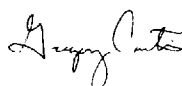
Regional librarians are dedicated to no-fee, long-term preservation of and access to U.S. government information. We are committed to partnering with one another and with GPO to address the pressing space, time, and monetary concerns that serving as a regional federal depository library engenders. We are dedicated to remaining within the current legal framework or to changing that almost 50 year old legal framework to better serve the public. We strongly encourage GPO to work with us to identify and implement innovative solutions to our challenges. We also ask that GPO reconsider its decision on the Minnesota/Michigan proposal and proactively work with ASERL to address any implementation issues.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to partnering with GPO in developing a 21<sup>st</sup> century federal depository library program that provides Americans with enhanced access to federal government information and effectively preserves that information for the future.

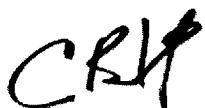
Sincerely,



Dan Barkely  
University of New Mexico



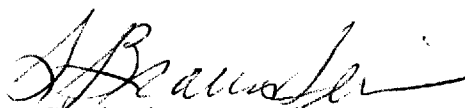
Gregory Curtis  
University of Maine



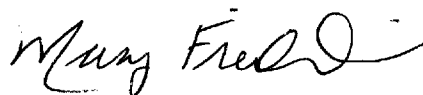
Charles Bernholz  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

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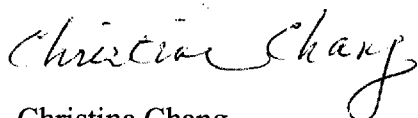
Lucy Farrow  
Auburn University at Montgomery



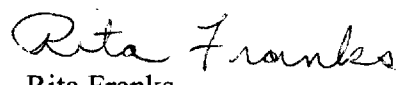
Stephanie Braunstein  
Louisiana State University



Mary Freilich  
University of Memphis



Christina Chang  
West Virginia University



Rita Franks  
Louisiana Tech



Kirsten Clark  
University of Minnesota



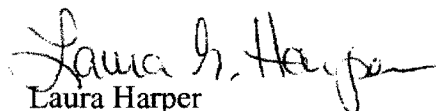
Kathy Hale  
State Library of Pennsylvania

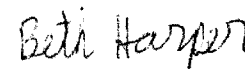



Marie Concannon  
Missouri University




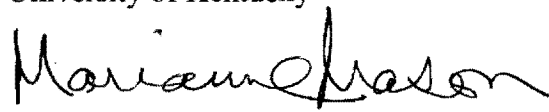
Audrey Hall  
State Library of Ohio

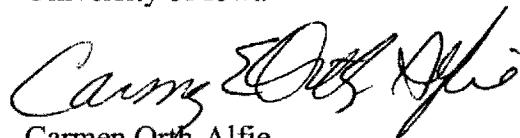
  
Laura Harper  
University of Mississippi

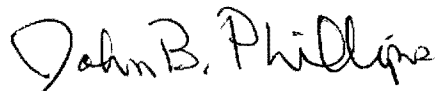
  
Beth Harper  
University of Wisconsin

  
Peggy Jobe  
University of Colorado, Boulder

  
Santee McAninch  
University of Kentucky

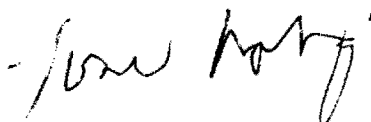
  
Marianne Mason  
University of Iowa

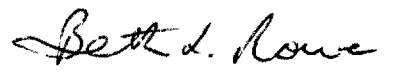
  
Carmen Orth-Alfie  
University of Kansas

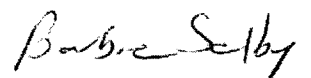
  
John Phillips  
Oklahoma State University

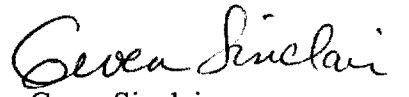
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Blaine Redemer  
State Library of Illinois

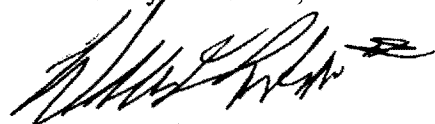
Tom Rohrig  
Texas Tech University

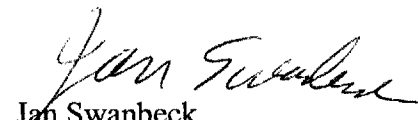


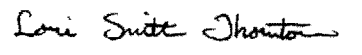
  
Beth Rowe  
University of North Carolina


  
Barbie Selby  
University of Virginia


  
Gwen Sinclair  
University of Hawaii, Manoa

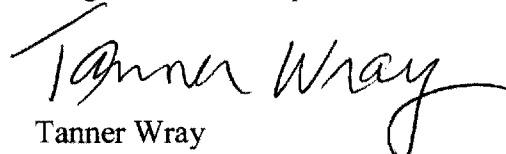
  
Bill Sudduth  
University of South Carolina

  
Jan Swanbeck  
University of Florida

  
Lori Thornton  
Washington State Library

  
John Walters  
Utah State University

  
Arlene Weible  
Oregon State Library

  
Tanner Wray  
University of Maryland

*Gail Fithian*

**Gail Fithian  
Boston Public Library**