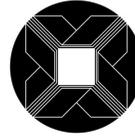


Lynne Bradley
Director - Office of Government Relations
American Library Association

Prue Adler
Associate Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries



April 24, 2009

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch,
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch,
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Aderholt:

On behalf of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), we write in support of the FY2010 appropriations request for the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) for \$166,300,000. 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.

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. ARL is an association of 123 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.

GPO Salaries and Expenses

Federal Depository Library Program. We urge your full support of the FY2010 appropriation for GPO with a particular focus on the Salaries and Expenses (S&E) appropriation 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 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 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 an estimated \$350 billion over the next three years, libraries are experiencing significant cutbacks in funding.

As people around the country react to the economic downturn and face personal financial challenges, they are turning to libraries to receive a greater number of services. Members of the public across the country now 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 new 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 provided service to their patrons and are very engaged in 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. Recently, Congress allocated \$1 million to the S&E appropriation to catalog and index government publications as cataloging publications is a costly but essential activity. Cataloging government publications, both print and electronic, is important as it permits users to find government information of interest.

To assist in this effort, 35 academic, research and state FDLs are collaborating to catalog 2.2 million pre-1976 cataloging records. This activity supplements the work of GPO in cataloging legacy collections. In addition to the cataloging projects, GPO also actively processes, catalogs and archives web-based material that GPO has harvested from other federal agencies. All of these projects require additional funding and we request the Subcommittee's continuing support of GPO in undertaking 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.

GPO recognizes the importance of providing government information to the public digitally and for many reasons. First, the vast majority of government information is now born “digital” and the standard dissemination format by Congress and federal agencies is electronic. Second, in discovering and using information, users prefer electronic access over print and microform formats. This is because students, researchers and members of the public can engage in sophisticated searching and manipulation of information and data including ready access to data, image files and the like. Increasingly, the data and information available is both current and historical as many libraries and others digitize special collections that are rich in the cultural and political history of our nation. Finally, users rely on Wi-Fi, handheld communication devices, smart phones, and the like to access information in the course of their daily lives. To meet these new demands, libraries and GPO are retooling content, tools and services to deliver needed resources, including government information.

To ensure that the public has effective access to both current and historic government information, GPO is reviewing proposals to digitize the legacy collections of the FDLs at no cost to the government. This digitization effort will greatly expand access to FDLP resources - to new users, to those not able to travel to regional depository libraries and will vastly improve how the public is able to research and mine the legacy collections. We applaud GPO’s efforts to make this government information broadly and effectively available at no cost to the public.

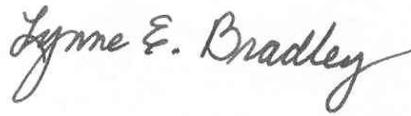
We fully support GPO’s continuing efforts to upgrade its technology platform. GPO recently deployed the Federal Digital System (FDsys), a digital content system that permits GPO to capture, provide access to and preserve government information from all three branches of government. Information resources from approximately 130 federal departments and agencies, along with the courts, are available via GPO’s technology platform. FDsys will replace GPO Access. It will evolve over time by incorporating new technologies that reflect changing user information needs.

GPO is requesting funding to support the migration of selected legacy applications from a mainframe system to a more stable environment. This migration will greatly improve access by FDLs to needed, real time information while at the same time, be more cost effective for both GPO and the FDLs. Initial funding to replace older equipment was provided in FY2009 and new funding would support additional modernization efforts.

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 publications 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 FY2010 appropriations request of \$166,300,000 and we look forward to working with you. We ask that you please include this statement as part of the hearing record.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynne E. Bradley".

Lynne Bradley
American Library Association

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Prudence S. Adler".

Prudence S. Adler
Association of Research Libraries