



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF LIBRARIES

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August 29, 2011

Mary Alice Baish
Superintendent of Documents
Government Printing Office

Dear Ms. Baish:

We represent the seven regional depository libraries that serve a state or territory other than the state in which we are located. Multi-state regional depositories now serve nearly 18% of the 1211 Federal Depository Libraries in the system. These multi-state regional depositories have fully served our constituencies in compliance with the requirements of Title 44, requirements that place the responsibility for making a regional designation in the hands of the appropriate Senators. Note the exemplar language in Section 1912 of Title 44:

Designation of regional depository libraries may be made by a Senator or the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico within the areas served by them, after approval by the head of the library authority of the State or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

GPO has relied on this statutory guidance in the past and approved, and in some cases initiated, the existing multi-state regionals.

We note with interest the recent (August 2) statement offered on the FDLP listserv relevant to multi-state regional depositories:

The State Library of Michigan has been working with the University of Minnesota to develop a service agreement for the provision of regional services for selective libraries, but the agreement has not yet been approved by the Joint Committee on Printing of the U.S. Congress.

We found this statement on the listserv troubling and do want to ensure, as the University of Minnesota/Michigan agreement proceeds, an understanding among all of us of the substantial existing multi-state agreements. While the Joint Committee on Printing's approval may be desirable from GPO's perspective, we note that JCP involvement has not been the practice for the existing multi-state regional depositories and, we believe, is not required by the statute. The statute calls for the relevant senators to designate the regional depository library. This authority of the senators is, we believe, in the best interest of the FDLP.

If there now is a new precedent that JCP approve any additional multi-state regional depositories such as that proposed between the Library of Michigan and the University of Minnesota, we believe that the status of all seven existing regional depositories serving multiple localities outside their own states is called into question.

We do want to differentiate this model for a multi-state regional from so-called “shared” models. In our multi-state regionals, one state handles all the regional functions for the other state(s). In the three states that currently operate under the shared model (Alabama, Louisiana, and North Dakota), the collections and other regional functions are shared by two libraries within a single state.

The Library of Michigan and University of Minnesota are proposing a multi-state model, identical to those we all represent. We assert that the precedence for approving multi-state regional depositories is approval by the senators in the relevant states after appropriate discussion and approval among the local institutions and state library commissions. The process was kept suitably local and was effective. Any deviation from past practice raises serious questions about the legitimacy of existing service models, causes confusion, and places barriers to efficient and cost effective planning for continued regional coverage and service.

We call upon you to clarify the process for establishing new multi-state regional agreements, acknowledging past practice and legal statutes. All of us understand that these are challenging times and that you are in a position that must deal with much of the change around us. We now have a proposal on the table that follows considerable historical precedence and we wish to see it proceed to approval and implementation. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that end result and, ultimately, effective service to all constituents.

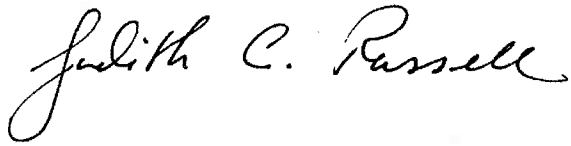
Sincerely,



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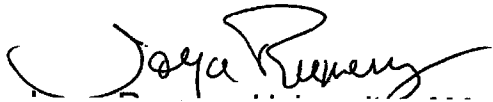
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