



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Richard G. Davis, Acting Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Mail Stop: IDCC
732 N. Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20401

Dear Mr. Davis:

As you may know, in 2006 the membership of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) approved an exploratory new program to identify options for cooperative collection management and services for Federal government publications to improve public access to those collections within our member institutions.

ASERL is the largest regional consortium of research libraries in the U.S., representing the 37 largest academic libraries in the 10 Southeastern states, including 11 Regional and 26 Selective depositories. Moreover, two ASERL libraries - Clemson University and the University of South Carolina - have successfully operated a shared Regional depository in their state for nearly twenty years.

With this experience available to us, the concept for ASERL's multi-state sharing project grew out of many discussions initiated by Federal depository librarians at both Regional and Selective depositories across our membership, plus discussions with the two non-ASERL Regionals and many non-ASERL Selectives in the region. It has received unanimous support from library directors within ASERL. The premises that undergird our project are:

- To create "centers of excellence" that would ensure we have multiple, complete retrospective collections of Federal publications by subject area distributed throughout the region, supported by subject matter experts who are able to provide sophisticated, in-depth reference services in the areas of their specialization;
- To develop outreach activities to improve public knowledge of how to access Federal government information.

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- To improve identification and preservation of those collections; and
- To utilize our existing regional document delivery system to provide rapid delivery of materials from the “centers of excellence” to users throughout the region.

ASERL believes that together these activities will improve public access to Federal government publications and improve long-term sustainability of the FDLP within our member libraries. **We strongly support GPO’s “Guidelines for Establishing Regional Depository Libraries” (May 2007) as we believe we share a common vision for the future.** The GPO Guidelines establish reasonable processes for ensuring that affected libraries can participate in the planning and implementation of any shared depositories. Further, the GPO Guidelines ensure that any such plans are reviewed and approved by the appropriate authorities within the participating libraries and by GPO, and include “exit strategies” should there be a need to modify the sharing agreements in the future.

We thank you and your colleagues for offering these Guidelines that we believe offer a balanced, flexible approach to cooperative access, services, and collection management while ensuring that the long-term goals of the FDLP remain intact. We look forward to working with you to implement such a vision in the months ahead.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Burger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

John Burger
Executive Director