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July 20, 2011

Ms. Cheryle Cole-Bennett
Coordinator, Collaborative Federal Depositories Program
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
1438 West Peachtree Street, Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30309-2955

Dear Ms. Cole-Bennett:

I am writing for information about the Southeast Region Guidelines for Management and Disposition of Federal Depository Library Collections. Can you provide a point of contact that could assist me in answering some areas of concern about this document? The Government Printing Office (GPO) recently asked the Federal Depository Library Community for feedback on the recently approved Guidelines. GPO was specifically interested in hearing from the 12 regional and 245 selective libraries directly affected by the ASERL guidelines.

Librarians were invited to provide GPO with comments and concerns regarding the guidelines. While several comments were submitted anonymously, some respondents identified themselves as ASERL libraries or other interested parties. In general, the comments were positive, but some questions indicated a lack of understanding or consensus about the guidelines. While I am not at liberty to share the total number of responses or the content of those responses, I do wish to share information we received through the survey where it appears there is a lack of clarity in the ASERL plan.

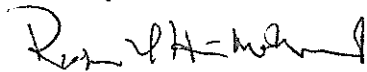
There were a number of concerns raised in relation to regional responsibilities and the changes in those responsibilities under the ASERL disposition process. Regionals will no longer receive discard lists and it is perceived they will lose regular interaction with selectives discards activities. Under the current program requirements, permission is given to selectives by regional librarians to discard materials based on the overall needs for the community they serve and for the comprehensive collection for the regional collection. This is also the case for substitution of material. Wholesale weeding and substitution without review and consideration of the needs of the statewide or regional collection are inconsistent with the legal mandate of the Federal Depository Library Program.

Another issue was raised when a selective library was urged to use a regional library in another state to authorize the discard of withdrawn depository material because its regional library was not using the pilot Disposition Database.

One respondent was concerned that the cost of shipping fees up to \$50 appears to be the responsibility of the offering library. This is a concern for those libraries that currently have no money for postage. Does this mean that the library would have to stop weeding? What are the implications under the ASERL plan if a library is not able to meet this obligation?

These issues are of concern to the Government Printing Office. GPO would like to ensure that the ASERL disposition process for Federal documents complies with 44 USC § 19 and meets the legal and program requirements of the Federal Depository Library Program. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with someone about our concerns. It is in the best interest of all Federal depository libraries—both within and outside ASERL—to clarify these issues as soon as possible. I can be reached at 202-512-0052. I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,



ROBIN L. HAUN-MOHAMED

Director, Collection Management and Preservation