



July 11, 2006

The Honorable Charles H. Taylor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

The Medical Library Association (MLA) and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) wish to express our concern regarding the \$2 million cut to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Library Network that was included in the FY07 President's budget request. This \$2 million cut would reduce the EPA Library Network's budget by 80%. The EPA has already begun to shut down its libraries and to reassign staff. We understand that EPA library services are now greatly reduced or no longer available to the general public in agency regional offices serving 19 states.

MLA, a nonprofit, educational organization, is comprised of health sciences information professionals with more than 4,500 members worldwide. Through its programs and services, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.

AAHSL is composed of the directors of libraries of 142 accredited U.S. and Canadian medical schools belonging to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). AAHSL's goals are to promote excellence in academic health sciences libraries and to ensure that the next generation of health practitioners is trained in information-seeking skills that enhance the quality of health care delivery.

MLA and AAHSL understand and respect the need for responsible stewardship of our nation's tax dollars—a reality of our current environment. However, we are concerned about the impact the \$2 million cut to the EPA Library Network would have on the ability of the EPA's researchers, scientists and the general public to gain access to the scientific literature produced by the Agency. We agree with the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), who represent more than 10,000 EPA scientists and whose letter of June 29th, 2006 contends that

the closing of these libraries threatens thousands of scientific studies and hinders emergency preparedness and anti-pollution enforcement activities.

Furthermore, MLA and AAHSL believe that the role of librarians in knowledge management and the value that they bring to the delivery of the EPA's information services must be addressed. Librarians have the training, the skill and the expertise to collect, find and organize information. While individual scientists and staff can accomplish a great deal on their own, as knowledge managers, librarians possess the specialized knowledge that allows them to access the most accurate, reliable and up-to-date resources in the most effective and efficient way. Because librarians are central to the intellectual capital of the EPA, it is essential that these key personnel not be lost through the closing of the libraries.

MLA and AAHSL respectfully ask for the restoration of the \$2 million for the EPA Library Network in the FY07 Interior Appropriations Bill. MLA and AAHSL also asks the subcommittee to request clarification and justification from the EPA on how the Agency will ensure that the information services and resources provided by the EPA libraries are preserved and continue to be made accessible by all who need them during this time of transition and change. As associations of health information professionals, MLA and AAHSL believe it is crucial to have a clear road map for how the EPA will manage information to support sound science and effective regulation now and in the future. For this reason, we ask that the subcommittee intervene and direct the EPA to keep the libraries open and the collections and services intact until these issues have been fully explored and brought to successful resolution.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you and are available to respond to any questions or concerns that you may have on this issue.

Sincerely,



Jean Shipman, AHIP, President
Medical Library Association



Logan Ludwig, President
Association of Academic Health
Sciences Libraries



July 11, 2006

The Honorable Conrad Burns
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
132 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Byron Dorgan
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
160 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Burns and Ranking Member Dorgan:

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