

# Atmospheric Science Librarians International

<http://www.aslionline.org/>

7 May 2007

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
2314 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

On behalf of the Atmospheric Science Librarians International (ASLI) I am writing to support position statements by our colleagues from the American Library Association (ALA) and the Special Libraries Association (SLA) regarding recent and proposed closures of federal libraries.

As information professionals in the sciences, we are well aware of the importance of unrestricted access to information and of the importance of the librarian who facilitates that access and analyzes for relevance and quality. We are extremely concerned about repercussions from closing federal libraries, removing staff, and taking information offline or deciding against putting information online. The long-term impacts of removing scientific information and staff will have devastating effects on future scientific research, both for the public and for scientists and researchers. In the absence of a national science library it is especially disappointing to see what appears to be a dismantling of federal science libraries without clear, well-thought-out plans for information access, maintenance and migration. Scientific information will be lost if deconstruction is implemented prior to coordination and stewardship. Librarians are key overseers for the ongoing work of digitization and organization of government reports and information for online access.

Researchers are often unaware of information sources available to them, whether in print or online. A key function of the librarian is to assist them in collecting the information they seek. With fewer federal libraries and librarians available, the researcher will look, unassisted, or turn to other, non-federal librarians whose ability to assist will be limited.

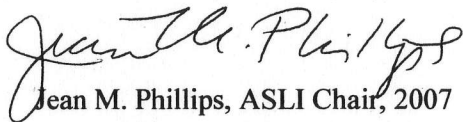
Funding for research produced by federal scientists is directly supported by the American people and as such, we are deeply concerned that those who supported the research may not have access. Additionally, the United States' leadership in the scientific enterprise is compromised if information is not available.

ASLI urges Congress to halt all federal library closures while it takes the necessary time to determine that adequate funding, planning and staffing are in place to maintain current and future access to this critical body of information. Left unchecked, the results of this activity may not be felt immediately, but in the future when it will be too late to restore it.

The Atmospheric Science Librarians International (ASLI) is a nonprofit organization devoted to communication and dissemination of information among libraries and educational institutions involved in atmospheric science research and scholarship.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

  
Jean M. Phillips, ASLI Chair, 2007

Director, Schwerdtfeger Library  
Space Science and Engineering Center  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
1225 W. Dayton Street  
Madison, WI 53706

Cc: Leslie Burger, President, American Library Association (ALA)  
Janice R. Lachance, CEO, Special Libraries Association (SLA)  
Dan Butcher, Executive Director, Canadian Library Association (CLA)