

**Resolution Concerning Government Information and Security**

WHEREAS, the people's right of access to government information is the cornerstone of our democratic society; and

WHEREAS, many government agencies have removed or limited access to government information since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, government agencies have reduced access to vital health and safety information for the general public on their websites; and

WHEREAS, United States Geological Services requested the Superintendent of Documents to instruct Federal Depository Libraries to remove and destroy the USGS Open File Report 99-248: Source-Area Characteristics of Large Public Surface-Water Supplies in the Coterminous United States: An Information Resource Source-Water Assessment, CD-ROM; and

WHEREAS, freedom of information access to vital economic, social and research data is likely to be diminished by the October 12, 2001 memorandum from Attorney General John Ashcroft; and

WHEREAS, the American Library Association has a long record of action in support of public access to information collected, compiled, produced and disseminated by or for the government of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the American Library Association recognizes the federal government's legitimate interest in protecting national security and public safety while preserving public access; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that ALA urge Congress and government agencies to ensure that public access to government information is maintained absent specific compelling and documented national security or public safety concerns regarding the information in question.

Initiated by: GODORT

Endorsed by: COL January 21, 2002

Endorsed by: IFC January 21, 2002

Policy: 51.5

Prior History: CD #28 January 21, 1987

CD #62 July 1, 1987

CD #20.2 February 3, 1999