ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

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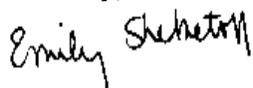ALA Response for Office of the Federal Register (OFR)

The American Library Association (ALA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Code of Federal Register (CFR). Libraries, including Federal Depository Libraries, provide the public with critical access to federal information, including the CFR. Libraries are an essential partner with the government in ensuring that citizens are aware of federal regulations. Libraries also provide free, unrestricted access to print and electronic federal publications.

Most of the proposed changes in this proceeding are technical. ALA supports changes that modernize access to the CFR. However, our members are concerned about changes that would limit citizen access to information within the CFR. This includes the proposed elimination of ancillaries and indexes to the daily Federal Register. Without such finding aids, it will be difficult for citizens to readily locate information and be informed about changes to regulations. ALA members support greater flexibility to publish user aids, but without knowing what the new tools may be and the proposed elimination of standard indexing, ALA is concerned that access will be diminished rather than improved.

ALA supports the change of print to electronic format for the Federal Register. While we have concerns about the digital divide within the United States, libraries can be a great resource for citizens in accessing federal information. We would encourage the Director of the Office of the Federal Register to ensure that electronic copies are preserved for future access as an official record of the federal government. ALA would be willing to participate and support efforts to assure ongoing public access to and preservation of federal publications.

Thank you again for seeking public input into modifications of the Federal Register.

Sincerely,

Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director
Washington Office, American Library Association