

RESOLUTION ON THE LOSS OF CRUCIAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

WHEREAS, Public access to information by and about the government is a basic tenet of a democratic society and crucial to the public's ability to hold the government accountable for its actions; and

WHEREAS, American taxpayers provide funding for the creation, aggregation, and dissemination of government information and are entitled to permanent no-fee access to this information; and

WHEREAS, The loss of previously published or freely accessible electronic government information negatively impacts business, science, research, and the American public's right to know; and

WHEREAS, The loss of critical government information resources such as the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* and the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) result from inadequate Congressional funding and the lack of consideration of stakeholder input; and

WHEREAS, Aggregated sources of government information make sense of a disorganized mass of data and save researchers, small-business owners, and the public untold hours each year by making data easily accessible; and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association (ALA) is on record as supporting no-fee access to government information; and

WHEREAS, Libraries are essential to the free flow of ideas and to ensuring the public's right to know; and

WHEREAS, America's libraries have had a strong commitment for over a century to provide equitable access to U.S. government information; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association (ALA):

1. Urges U.S. Congress to restore funding to ensure permanent no-fee public access to aggregated sources of government information.
2. Urges the establishment of a mandated process with adequate notification to

include the opportunity for public notice and comment with consultation by librarians, researchers, small businesses and other appropriate stakeholders before decisions are made to discontinue access to current or historical information resources when the federal government initiates, significantly modifies, or terminates information products.

3. Urges Congress to require that agencies discontinuing access to current or historical information resources transfer the content and related functionality to the U.S. Government Printing Office or other public institutions that can ensure continued no-fee digital access to this information.
4. Urges Congress to improve the federal government's policies and capabilities for making government information available to the public in an open, timely, participatory, and transparent manner.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, January 24, 2012
In Dallas, Texas



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council