

RESOLUTION ON EPA LIBRARIES

WHEREAS, for more than 30 years, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its network of libraries have provided reliable, accurate information about sensitive environmental issues that affect the health and safety of our families and communities; and

WHEREAS, these EPA libraries have provided access to vital information to researchers and to scientists, including EPA researchers investigating environmental issues that impact our Nation; and

WHEREAS, the EPA Headquarters libraries and the 27 regional and laboratory libraries are staffed with experienced, professional librarians who facilitate access to information, fielding 134,000 research requests from EPA scientists and enforcement staff and others in the last year; and

WHEREAS, the EPA Libraries house and catalog unique collections, including approximately 50,000 primary source documents not available elsewhere in any format, on vital environmental issues; and

WHEREAS, the EPA Libraries serve as institutional repositories for internal documentation as well as commercially published literature about the topics agencies regulate, investigate, and research; and

WHEREAS, the EPA Libraries operate public reading rooms, providing access to collections that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of constituents in their geographic region, at times specifically offering that access to comply with federal law; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the *Business Case for Information Services: EPA's Regional Libraries and Centers* prepared by Stratus Consulting for the EPA concluded that, "calculated conservatively, the benefit-to-cost ratio for EPA library services ranges between 2:1 and 5.7:1"; and

WHEREAS, the *Draft EPA FY 2007 Library Plan: National Framework* (June 1, 2006), including the current proposal to move materials to the web, does not ensure satisfactorily that the public, researchers, scientists and policymakers will have continued access to the staff, services, and high quality, accurate information found in the EPA Libraries; and

WHEREAS, the proposed FY 2007 budget for EPA Libraries contains a \$2.5 Million cut which: has already resulted in the closure and imminent closure of some headquarters, regional and laboratory libraries and the reduction of staff at other EPA Libraries; will put the collections and services of the EPA Libraries at risk, causing essential information about the environment to be lost;

would compromise the public's health and safety by making it difficult, even impossible, for the EPA staff and scientists, other scientists and researchers, the public, contractors and regulated industries, and federal, state, and local policymakers to find accurate and high-quality information upon which to base decisions about health and safety concerns; and
RESOLVED, that the American Library Association (ALA) urge Congress to direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reprogram \$2.5 Million of the EPA FY 2007 budget to fund EPA Libraries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that ALA urge the EPA to restore funding to the EPA regional and laboratory libraries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ALA urge the EPA to develop a responsible information and collections management strategy, and make it available for public comment, to ensure continued access for the public and other stakeholders to the collections and services of the EPA Libraries.

Endorsed by ALA Council 6/28/06

Endorsed in principle by GODORT 06/26/2006

Endorsed in principle by FAFLRT 06/24/06