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**Congress of the United States**  
**Joint Committee on Printing**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 - 6157

February 27, 2008

The Honorable Robert Tapella  
Public Printer  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Tapella:

Thank you for Acting Public Printer William Turri's letter of September 13, 2007, requesting the approval of the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) for designation of the regional depository libraries at the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska as "shared" Federal regional depository libraries.

As Mr. Turri's letter notes, the underlying request from the two Federal regional depository libraries operating in different states presents the first formal request from regional depositories in different states to share collections and to serve depository libraries across state lines. The statute authorizing regional depository libraries (44 U.S.C. 1912) does not contemplate regional depositories sharing collections and serving depository libraries outside their borders. Consequently, the instant request asks the JCP to approve the Public Printer's expansion of the regional depository library program across state lines under the statute (44 U.S.C. 1914) granting the Public Printer flexibility in the "implementation" of the program subject to JCP approval.

While Congress has given the Joint Committee broad authority over operations of the Government Printing Office (GPO), which administers the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), that authority has limits. Before considering GPO's request on the merits, the JCP must determine whether the authority granted to the Public Printer and the JCP by 44 U.S.C. 1914 encompasses programmatic change of the magnitude sought here. For guidance, the Joint Committee consulted the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), Library of Congress, for its opinion, a copy of which is enclosed.

As you will note, CRS concluded that neither the language nor legislative history of 44 U.S.C. 1914 supports GPO's interpretation of the statute. After careful review, the Joint Committee finds the CRS analysis persuasive; if the Public Printer may not authorize shared regional depository libraries under 44 U.S.C. 1914, the JCP cannot approve such action.

Although the Joint Committee cannot approve the Public Printer's request, it is nonetheless concerned that this request to share resources and responsibilities may signal that growing challenges confront regional depository libraries in maintaining and supporting effective public access through the FDLP. Accordingly, the Joint Committee directs you, in consultation with all concerned elements of the library community, to undertake a thorough examination of the current state of regional depository libraries nationwide. The purpose of the study will be to evaluate the extent to which public access via the FDLP may be impaired by current or projected organizational, financial, technological, or other conditions affecting these institutions. You are further directed to provide the Joint Committee with your findings on or before June 1, 2008, together with any legislative recommendations for improvements to the program that you may choose to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert A. Brady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ROBERT A. BRADY  
Chairman

Enclosure

CC: All Members, Joint Committee on Printing  
The Honorable Ben Nelson  
The Honorable Pat Robert