

The Depository Library Council's Remarks on The Summary Meeting on the Future of the GPO Sales Program

The Depository Library Council wishes to thank GPO for convening a meeting involving the various private and public stakeholders that have a compelling interest in any version of a Sales Program the GPO envisioned for the future. It was a wise decision to solicit advice from a diverse group of experts before pursuing a project that might not realize the success envisioned by the Public Printer. Further, Council wishes to thank GPO for sharing the results of the meeting with Council and the larger community.

As was noted in Council's response to the Public Printer in January 2004 and again reiterated at the Spring 2004 meeting, any type of Sales Program envisioned by GPO has a very narrow scope in which to operate. The fundamental principle acknowledged by all participants was that the inherent mission of GPO is to provide government information in all forms and formats to the American public at no-fee. To do anything less is a disservice to the American public and erodes the fundamental mission of the GPO.

Whether a need continues to exist for a Sales Program can only be determined by further examination on the part of GPO. GPO may discover after all the market research and analysis that a viable Sales Program may or may not exist; and that it may or may not generate the type of revenue envisioned by the Public Printer. It is evident from the discussions at the meeting that many felt there may be niche markets GPO can pursue. Whether GPO engages in value-added services, web portal customization, pushing information to interested parties, or partnerships with other federal agencies or non-federal entities are matters that should be pursued further. Again, Council wishes to emphasize that any content sold for a fee should also have a corresponding no-fee equivalent for the American public.

Additionally Council applauds GPO for:

- Recognizing that many of the services provided in the Sales Program have become obsolete in the electronic environment and discontinuing them to save costs.
- Investigating whether GPO should re-locate its operations to another facility within the District of Columbia. Revenue realized from any sale or lease of the North Capitol property should be used primarily to ensure continued no-fee access to government information products and services.
- Recognizing that GPO should not engage in unfair competition with privately funded entities while exploring potential new business products and services.
- Exploring potential new partnerships with other federal agencies, particularly outside of the legislative branch, that may provide their information via *GPO Access*.
- Exploring potential partnerships that expand the access of federal government information to the American public via e-commerce sites such as

Amazon.com, commercial database aggregators, and other such companies as long as no-fee access to similar services is continued to be made available.

Simultaneously Council cautions GPO to:

- Maintain continued no-fee access to government information to libraries participating in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Council and the library community assign the highest priority to continued no-fee access to federal government information.
- Ensure vendor partnerships do not undercut the no-fee access currently enjoyed by participants in the FDLP.
- Provide accurate, consistent budget reports to Congress and the library community.
- Ensure long-term, no-fee, permanent public access to information content that may be generated through partnerships with non-federal sources.
- Understand that the Sales Program may never generate the large-scale revenues envisioned by the Public Printer and continue to identify and implement cost-cutting and revenue-generating measures that can be accomplished by departments other than the Superintendent of Documents/Information Dissemination unit.
- Understand that while arrangements or partnerships with private, commercial entities may be a source of potential revenue, any government information used in the production of these materials must remain in the public domain.