



American Association  
of Law Libraries



American Library  
Association



Association of College  
and Research Libraries



Association of  
Research Libraries



Greater Western  
Library Alliance



SPARC – Scholarly  
Publishing & Academic  
Resources Coalition



Special Libraries  
Association

September 20, 2007

To: The U.S. Senate

Re: Support for public access to publicly funded research at the National Institutes of Health

Dear Senator;

On behalf of seven national organizations, collectively representing over 140,000 libraries in the United States and employing over 350,000 librarians and other personnel, we are writing to affirm our support for timely online access to articles reporting the results of government-funded research. Specifically, we support language in the FY08 Labor/HHS/Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill (S.1710) that directs the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to strengthen its Public Access Policy and *require* NIH-funded researchers to deposit copies of NIH-funded research articles into the online archive of the National Library of Medicine.

The NIH Public Access Policy is designed to dramatically expand use of NIH research findings, enhance management of NIH's research portfolio, and provide for a sustainable archive of research results funded with U.S. taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, as a voluntary policy since 2005, it has fallen short of achieving its intended results. In fact, the voluntary policy has attained a compliance rate of less than five percent by individual researchers. Top officials at NIH, including Director Zerhouni, have publicly recognized the shortcomings of the existing policy and have indicated that, to successfully achieve its goals, the policy must be made mandatory. Two influential advisory bodies – the NIH Public Access Working Group and the National Library of Medicine's Board of Regents – have reached the same conclusion and recommended that the NIH policy be mandatory.

We urge you to:

- Support the inclusion of language put forth in the Labor/HHS Appropriations bill directing the NIH to implement a mandatory policy and ensuring timely online access to all research articles stemming from NIH-funded research – without change – in any appropriate vehicle.

The improved policy will ensure that NIH-funded researchers will deposit an electronic copy of their final, peer-reviewed manuscript in NIH's PubMed Central online archive upon the article's acceptance for publication – to be made publicly available as soon as possible and no later than 12 months after publication.

Without firm direction to NIH, the public access policy will not achieve its intended results – to the detriment of our nation's substantial investment in biomedical research. We respectfully ask that you support the mandatory NIH public access provision advanced by the Appropriations Committee in the FY08 appropriations bill. Thank you.

American Association of Law Libraries

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American Library Association

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