



May 7, 2007

Ms. Margaret O'Brien
Chief Information Officer
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Headquarters
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. O'Brien:

The American Association of Law Libraries, the American Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association appreciate your meeting with us on April 2, 2007, along with key members of your staff. At that time, you assured us that there would be space for NHTSA's TIS Reading Room at the new facility. We understand that you are constrained by both budget issues and physical space and are pleased that you are able to continue to make the TIS Reading Room available for the public; however, we remain concerned with the removal of public access to important NHTSA resources previously available in the TIS Reading Room.

The TIS Reading Room provides important highway safety resources, especially those of historical nature, that are used by various groups within our communities: journalists, researchers, corporations and the general public. Though only a few individuals per day may visit the Reading Room, these individuals represent larger constituencies, and the information retrieved is compiled and disseminated to the population at large for public safety purposes.

Our associations are specifically concerned with the missing resources listed in the April 11, 2007, letter to you from Mr. Sean Kane of Safety Research & Strategies, Inc. At the April 2, 2007 meeting, you agreed to address the missing records once the stakeholders compiled a specific list. That having been done, we urge you to remain engaged with these stakeholders and develop ways to return these resources to public access—either in the original or in another format.

Resources that would be especially detrimental to remove from public access include the HSL and Wang databases, as well as the Vehicle Owner Questionnaires and Federal Register notebooks. The April 11, 2007 letter from Mr. Kane strongly documents how important these resources are to public safety research; the historical records are especially

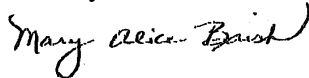
crucial to the study and development of improved safety regulations. Mr. Kane's documentation also details how many of these resources serve uniquely as components to the overall system of information—separating these components for archiving and not providing public access copies will destroy this valuable network of information.

Our final concern has to do with archiving. While we are pleased NHTSA is working with NARA to archive records, preserving original institutional records for future administrative, legal, and cultural purposes is very different from providing access to copies of records frequently requested by the public. Accessing records from NARA's Records Centers will be much more time-consuming and in some cases will require written permission to obtain as well as additional fees for copies, if the records can indeed be identified and located.

We thank you for your commitment to ensuring that the TIS Reading Room remains open; however, we urge you to look into these missing records and databases and to have an open dialog with all stakeholders to develop ways for these valuable resources to remain easily accessible to the public.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Our organizations look forward to continuing our dialog and to assisting you in your efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of assistance.

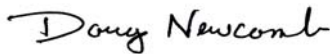
Sincerely,



Mary Alice Baish
American Association of Law Libraries
202-662-9200; baish@law.georgetown.edu



Tara J. Olivero
American Library Association
202-628-8410; tolivero@alawash.org



Douglas W. Newcomb
Special Libraries Association
703-647-4923; dnewcomb@sla.org

cc: The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
The Honorable James Oberstar, Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee
on Transportation and Infrastructure
The Honorable Mary E. Peters, U.S. Secretary of Transportation