July 14, 2011

Honorable William J. Boarman
Public Printer
U. S. Government Printing Office
732 North Capitol Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20401

Dear Mr. Boarman:

On behalf of the 63,000 members of the American Library Association (ALA) I write to request that the website http://FDLPmodeling.net and the final report submitted by the contractor, Ithaka S+R (Ithaka), be made available to the public. These products were created as part of the Superintendent of Documents’ taxpayer-supported contract with Ithaka to recommend new models for the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) that are both sustainable and practical.

In September 2010, the Superintendent of Documents contracted Ithaka to gather information, provide open public comment, and report back to the Superintendent their findings. Ithaka then created the website and began to reach out to the public to gather their opinions and ideas. Throughout the process Ithaka utilized the website as a tool to keep the public updated on their progress and provide opportunities to comment on sections of the draft report.

In March 2011, Ithaka submitted the report and the Superintendent announced that there would be discussion at the spring depository Library Council meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Many members of the depository community traveled to San Antonio to participate in those discussions. However, the item was pulled from the agenda after individuals and their libraries expended travel funds to participate. The Superintendent then announced that the report would be finalized in May allowing for discussion at the ALA’s Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana in late June. The week of the conference, the above mentioned website containing the draft report was taken down and the final report has not been released, severely limiting discussion.

The ALA has long advocated that no-fee access to unclassified government information is a public right and a principal function of the federal government. Further, the ALA has fought for Government Printing Office (GPO) appropriations and for the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) for many decades.

The library community asserts that the lack of transparency shown by the GPO in these circumstances is unacceptable. We now ask that the GPO fulfill its mission of keeping America informed by reinstating this website and providing access to the final Ithaka report.

Sincerely,

Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director
ALA Washington Office