Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 30, 2006

The Honorable Stephen Johnson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson:

We are writing to express our serious concerns over the current implementation of your plan to reorganize the library system of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We understand that EPA is in the process of closing libraries and dispersing and destroying materials. Additionally, the General Services Administration is auctioning off library equipment. These actions are being undertaken in accordance with the budget request the President submitted for fiscal year 2007. Congress, however, has approved neither the President's 2007 budget request nor the library closure. We request that you maintain the status quo of the libraries and their materials while this issue is under investigation and review by Congress.

We also request that EPA brief our staffs and provide a written plan to Congress that includes the schedule and procedures that EPA intends to use to govern the disposition of documents, the consolidation of library services, and the transfer of paper and microfiche documents to electronic forms that will be publicly available. We further request that you ensure that Agency staff compile and maintain records of the location and content of all library material, including materials that have already been dispersed, to ensure it can be retrieved and used by Agency personnel and the public.

Over the past 36 years, EPA's libraries have accumulated a vast and invaluable trove of public health and environmental information, including at least 504,000 books and reports, 3,500 journal titles, 25,000 maps, and 3.6 million information objects on microfilm, according to the report issued in 2004: *Business Case for Information Services: EPA's Regional Libraries and Centers* prepared for the Agency by Stratus Consulting. Each one of EPA's libraries also had information experts who helped EPA staff and the public access and use the Agency's library collection and information held in other library collections outside of the Agency. It now appears that EPA officials are dismantling what is likely one of our country's most comprehensive and accessible collections of environmental materials.

The press has reported on the concerns over the library reorganization plan voiced by EPA professional staff of the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA), 16 local union Presidents representing EPA employees, and the American Library Association. In response to our request of September 19, 2006, (attached), the Government Accountability Office has initiated an investigation of EPA's plan to close its libraries. Eighteen Senators sent

a letter on November 3, 2006, to leaders of the Senate Appropriations Committee asking them to direct EPA "to restore and maintain public access and onsite library collections and services at EPA's headquarters, regional, laboratory and specialized program libraries while the Agency solicits and considers public input on its plan to drastically cut its library budget and services" (attached). Yet, despite the lack of Congressional approval and the concerns expressed over this plan, your Agency continues to move forward with dismantling the EPA libraries.

It is imperative that the valuable government information maintained by EPA's libraries be preserved. We ask that you please confirm in writing by no later than Monday, December 4, 2006, that the destruction or disposition of all library holdings immediately ceased upon the Agency's receipt of this letter and that all records of library holdings and dispersed materials are being maintained.

Sincerely,

BART GORDON
Ranking Member
Committee on Science

JOHN D. DINGELL
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Ranking Member
Committee on Government Reform

JAMES L. OBERSTAR
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Enclosures