



March 8, 1990

Law and Legislation Committee, Sacramento, California

Sacramento Public Library  
and Information Service

HONORABLE MEMBERS IN SESSION:

SUBJECT: FEDERAL H.R. 3849, THE "GOVERNMENT  
PRINTING OFFICE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1990"

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SUMMARY:

As a Federal Depository Library, the Sacramento Public Library will be directly affected by the above referenced legislation. Affect would be to increase cost of the Library in providing government information to patrons.

BACKGROUND:

For the past 100 years, citizens have had free access to government information for all citizens in a environment unencumbered by political or economic motives. The proposed legislation will fundamentally change citizens access to this information.

The proposed legislation would alter Title 44 of the U.S. Code as follows:

1. the term "Government publication" means an information product which is published, in any tangible format, medium, or substrate, at Government expense, or as required by law; and
2. the term "printing" means the technological processes used to reproduce multiple copies of information products which are published, in any tangible format, medium, or substrate, at Government expense, or as required by law.

By changing the definition of "government publication" the bill will effectively exclude electronic information services, such as bulletin boards and other on line data, from being considered government publications. Additionally, as more information sources are published electronically, H.R. 3849 would shift more and more cost to users and libraries. The result would be shrinking pool of printed material resulting in less and less access for citizens.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Libraries already invest money in staff and equipment to provide access to government information. H.R. 3849 would significantly increase library costs to provide the same level of access.

POLICY IMPACT:

None

MBE/WBE:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

The Library recommends that the Law and Legislation Committee express opposition to this proposed legislation. The Library also recommends that the Law and Legislation Committee state the position that:

1. the definitions of government publication and printing include information products and services which are published, regardless of format, at government expense, or as required by law;
2. the users of government information be specifically exempted from paying "contributions" (user fees) for access to government information in depository libraries;
3. electronic services "shall" be made available to depository libraries; and
4. the costs of disseminating information in electronic formats to depository libraries be shared by the issuing agency and the Government Printing Office through appropriated funds and not by depository libraries or their users of those electronic services.

Respectfully submitted,



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Library Director

Law and Legislation  
March 15, 1990  
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