

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2006

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

Dear Administrator Johnson:

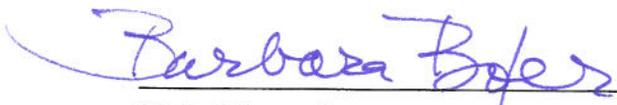
We request that you ensure that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not destroy or permanently dispose of public health and environmental information currently or formerly held in any EPA library. We also request that you ensure records are compiled and maintained that describe the location and content of all library material, including items that have been dispersed, to preserve Agency staff and the public's access to this information.

Over the last 36 years, EPA has 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 3,600,000 information objects on microfilm. Each one of EPA's libraries also had information experts who helped EPA staff and the public to access and use Agency information and information in other libraries outside of the Agency. Now, EPA officials appear to be rushing to dismantle the foundation of the Agency's accumulated knowledge.

As you know, Congressional members are extremely concerned about EPA's efforts to shut down its libraries. On November 3, 2006, 18 Senators sent a letter to Senate appropriators 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) The GAO is investigating EPA's library closures following a September 19, 2006 letter to GAO by members of the House of Representatives. (Attached)

We have received information indicating that EPA officials may have attempted to discard important information from EPA's libraries. The potential destruction of valuable government information is an extremely serious issue, and if such destruction is occurring we urge you to halt it immediately. Please confirm in writing by no later than December 7, 2006 the status and description of all EPA library holdings—including materials that the EPA may have already disposed of, since announcing the closure of Agency libraries.

Sincerely,


United States Senator


United States Senator

Dick Durbin

United States Senator

Max Baucus

United States Senator

Kevin Salyer

United States Senator

Blaine Luetkemeyer

United States Senator

Maria Cantwell

United States Senator

Jack Reed

United States Senator

Tom F. Kelly

United States Senator

Hillary Rodham Clinton

United States Senator

Joe Lieberman

United States Senator

Tom Vaisano

United States Senator

Tom Harkin

United States Senator