

Dear [Insert Name],

This letter is to notify you that the Clemson University Libraries are currently considering relinquishing our status as a shared regional federal depository library to selective federal depository library. By returning to selective depository library status, the Clemson University Libraries would be able to increase the relevance and usability of the collection while reducing costs. The increasing availability of government publications online would allow this to be accomplished with little, if any, decrease in the availability of information.

Federal depository libraries receive materials from the Government Printing Office free of charge. The depositories then store, preserve, and make these materials freely available to the public. Because the libraries do not own the materials, all federal depository libraries must observe the rules and guidelines for receiving and disposing of the materials based on their status as a regional or a selective depository.

Regional depository libraries receive all documents from the government and must retain the materials in perpetuity unless the documents become obsolete or the Superintendent of Documents instructs the depositories to discard the materials. In a July 2008 report on regional depository libraries, some libraries reported that labor, preservation, and support services cost their institution more than \$1 million each year.

Selective depository libraries choose which items to receive and can therefore create a government documents collection that is shaped to the needs of their users. Selective depository libraries are only required to retain items for five years.

As a land grant university, Clemson has hosted a federal depository library since its founding. In 1962, when the selective/regional designations were instituted, our depository library was given selective status. In 1988, we became a shared regional depository library with the University of South Carolina. Because our regional depository library status is shared, Clemson is able to choose which documents to receive (like a selective depository library), but as a regional depository, we must retain nearly everything in perpetuity. By returning to selective depository library status, Clemson would gain greater flexibility and control over its government documents collection. We would be able to focus our efforts on collecting and maintaining materials that support the university's emphasis areas, while reducing costs by discarding materials that do not support Clemson's vision and mission. Because so many government publications are now available online, the information that is available to our patrons, both within and outside the university, would change very little.

Being a selective depository library would not impede Clemson University's Top 20 aspirations. 70% of the top twenty public universities are selective federal depository libraries. Before relinquishing our current status, we would continue to consult with South Carolina's other regional depository library, the University of South Carolina, to discuss any impact this change might have on the University of South Carolina's government documents collection.

If you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact Clemson's Government Documents Librarian, Celina Nichols by phone at 864-656-5173 or via email at cnichol@clemson.edu.

Sincerely,

Kay Wall
Dean of Libraries