



National Council of EPA Locals Council #238
American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)
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July 21, 2008

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate

The Honorable Barack Obama
United States Senate

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate

The Honorable John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Bart Gordon, Chairman
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Brad Miller, Chairman
Subcommittee on Investigations and
Oversight, U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Science and Technology

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks, Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies, U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Diane Feinstein, Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Honorable Members of Congress:

On July 10, 2008, AFGE Council 238 successfully concluded negotiations with EPA over the reopening of the previously shuttered libraries. The Memorandum of Agreement is currently awaiting "Agency Head Review" pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 7114(c). In the interim, AFGE Council 238 would like to inform you that there were a few areas that the Union was not been able to address, but that we're sure that Congress could easily address them in correspondence with the Agency or future hearings over the EPA Library Network issue.

- 1. Adequacy of Space and Resources for Reopened Libraries:** The Union does not have the authority nor does it want to dictate the physical size for each reopened library. Rather, that burden should rest squarely with the Agency, which needs to conduct an assessment (internal or external) of the need for space and resources for each library. Specifically, what is the Agency's justification or

analysis of the amount of space necessary for each reopened library, since in the case of the Region 5 (Chicago) and Region 6 (Dallas) libraries, the Agency has chosen to not reopen them in the previously occupied spaces, but has proposed a much smaller space and resource requirement?

AFGE Council 238 respectfully request that Congress continue to oversee the adequateness of "...space and resources..." proposed by the Agency for each reopened library.

2. **Input and Comment by General Public:** It was clear from our negotiations, as well as by what the Agency has done and not done, that little if any involvement from the general public was requested or has been sought. For example, there have been no "town hall" meetings in Washington, DC, Chicago, Dallas or Kansas City for the affected public, nor have there been any "requests for public comment" on EPA's Library Network either in the *Federal Register* or in local newspapers. **AFGE Council 238 respectfully requests that Congress continue to oversee the Agency's progress in reopening its libraries, and ensure that the Agency seeks input from the general public with respect to reopening the previously closed libraries, as well as any further "modernization" of the EPA Library Network.**

3. **Budget Appropriation:** Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 in the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008, "*...to restore the network of EPA libraries recently closed or consolidated by the Administration....*" The Union negotiating team had the impression from the Agency negotiators, that they are "confused" as to what Congress intended when it wrote: "*The amended bill includes \$1,000,000 above the request to restore the network of EPA libraries recently closed or consolidated by the Administration, instead of \$2,000,000 as proposed by the Senate.*"¹ **AFGE Council 238 respectfully requests that Congress require an accounting of the monies to ensure that the Agency allocated the funding to those EPA libraries that were closed, or had their hours of operation reduced.**

Thank you so much for your hard work on behalf of the American people and taxpayers.

On behalf of AFGE Council 238, I remain fraternally yours,

/s/

John J. O'Grady
Treasurer, AFGE Council 238

¹ Division of the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2764 relative to the versions of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 (H.R. 2643 and S. 1696), passed by the House of Representatives and reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee