

TESTIMONY GIVEN TO
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Articles I, IV, and V
14 February 2011

Chairman Otto and members of the subcommittee, my name is Peggy Rudd and I am the director and librarian of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

You have a formidable task before you – to meet the diverse needs of the people of Texas with significantly reduced state resources. We understand budget cuts are necessary and we are willing to do our part. We are grateful that H.B. 1 left intact the Texas Archives, the State and Local Records Management Program, and the Talking Book Program. However, the 71% proposed cut in General Revenue zeros out vital programs and services and impacts communities and educational institutions across the state. We ask the Legislature to reconsider the proposed budget for the Library and Archives Commission and restore some funding for the commission's and library community's priorities.

Library Resource Sharing Programs – TexShare Databases

H.B. 1 reduces General Revenue funding for the TexShare databases by \$4 million per year, \$8 million over the biennium, and directs the agency in Rider #6 to increase fees to the 677 members of the statewide TexShare consortium to make up for the elimination of General Revenue. For \$8 million per biennium, the state pays 32 cents per Texan to ensure that students, researchers, and the public have access to reputable, reliable, valid information from 50 online databases available as a core collection to college, university, public, and medical libraries. These databases are unlike the sponsored sites on the open Internet favored by advertisers and contain information not freely accessible via standard search engines. TexShare member libraries already pay \$3.1 million in fees per biennium for database access. These fees were instituted in response to state budget cuts in 2003.

The TexShare consortium ensures that even the smallest, most poorly funded library in the state has access to the same set of core TexShare databases and state-of-the-art,

one-stop search service as the largest research library. By using the negotiating power of the State of Texas, TSLAC saves TexShare members more than \$90 million per year in license fees for online database information. Use continues to climb. (See table below.)

TexShare Usage FY2010	
Database Searches	64,289,294
User Sessions	24,135,800
Documents Served	40,198,092

After discussions with TexShare member libraries, we believe that TSLAC will be able to increase TexShare database fees in the 2012-2013 biennium to only \$4 million, \$900,000 above the current biennial fee total of \$3.1 million. Public and academic library budgets have been and will continue to be reduced at the local and institutional levels. Thus, TexShare member libraries will be unable to pay database costs should the agency drastically increase its fees by 253 percent. Reductions in database content would impact the number of journals and magazines, newspapers and newswires, and reference books that TSLAC would be able to license. The reduction of peer-reviewed journals would be especially devastating to Texas colleges and universities that rely on these vital resources to support academic research.

Budget reductions would also impact programs of longstanding that make Texas government information easily available to the public. Since 1963, TSLAC has collected, cataloged, and distributed a wide variety of state publications to a network of 46 depositories in academic and public libraries, and the Library of Congress. This year, more than 26,600 publications will be distributed.

Since 1999, TSLAC has worked with state agencies to provide easy online access to state government information from 238 agency websites. The Texas Records and Information Locator (TRAIL) Service search engine provides one-stop location of state agency information rather than forcing people to search all 238 agency websites individually.

The Interlibrary Loan Service makes it possible for library patrons to find and request materials that their “home” library doesn’t own. Libraries borrowed 437,000 items from other libraries for their patrons last year via Interlibrary Loan. With drastic reductions in TSLAC’s General Revenue funding, the agency will not meet Match and Maintenance of Effort requirements for the federal Library Services and Technology Act funds that pay for this program.

Budget reductions also would eliminate staff needed to manage these programs effectively and improve them as the technology that supports these programs evolves.

The agency requests \$3.5 million over the biennium, a reduction from the current funding level of \$8 million.

Aid to Local Libraries – Loan Star Libraries Program

H.B. 1 not only eliminates funding for the Loan Star Libraries Program of direct aid to our 541 accredited public libraries, but also instructs us in Rider #7 to close down the program and other library development activities by December 31, 2011. We ask that you reconsider. With \$1.5 million per year in the coming biennium, we would be able to keep the Loan Star Libraries Program alive until the economic climate is more favorable. That is a 78 percent reduction from the current biennial appropriation of \$13.4 million.

Community libraries are facing unprecedented demands for service at a time when their local funding is being reduced – in some cases, drastically. Usage of Texas public libraries is growing rapidly. Eighty million visits were made to the libraries last year, a 7 percent increase over the previous year. Texans borrowed 116 million items from public libraries, a 6 percent increase, and the number of children’s items borrowed increased 15 percent.

Communities have used Loan Star Libraries grants to purchase computers that provide critical access to citizens who would otherwise not have any, and to provide programs

such as hands-on computer training, literacy programs, afterschool homework help, English-as-a-Second-Language instruction, and children's and teen programs. The number of Texans who used computers and other equipment purchased with Loan Star Libraries grant funds increased 85 percent last year, to 624,468. For the estimated 120,000 Texas families that are currently teaching approximately 300,000 children at home, the public library is a vital educational resource.

Last year the Cross Plains Public Library in Callahan County was named a finalist for Library Journal's "Best Small Library in America." The award is co-sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. At the ceremony in Portland, Oregon, honoring the winner and two finalists, Jill Nishi of the Gates Foundation had this to say about the library:

"In the midst of challenging economic times, Cross Plains Public Library has managed to raise a majority of its operating funds to expand space and services – a testament to its value in the community. The library works to ensure that its public computers and Internet connections – the only library services of this nature within a 20 mile radius – are well-supported and can meet growing public demand. Its innovative and ambitious 'Meet the Author' program exemplifies how library programming can bring residents together to strengthen the community."

Cross Plains Public Library serves 2,200 people. Last year, their total operating budget was \$26,876; \$3,325 from the city and \$2,000 from Callahan County. The remaining \$16,838 in local revenue was raised through donations, book and bake sales, and other community-based fund raising drives. The library received \$4,713 in Loan Star Libraries funding, which represents 18 percent of the library's operating budget.

The Coleman County Public Library celebrated its 125th birthday in 2010. Public school students in the county are issued a personal laptop in 4th grade, and when school lets

out in the afternoon, students flock to the public library, which is a Wi-Fi hotspot, to do homework, write papers, and access electronic resources. The library director told me that the library's wireless connection slows to a crawl when the students start hitting their network. Coleman Public Library is one of our 38 partner libraries in the "Technology Expertise, Access, and Learning for All Texans" (TEAL) grant under the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) from the federal National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Coleman will use their BTOP funds to enhance their wireless network and expand the computers they can make available to students and other members of their community.

These two libraries are by no means exceptions. There are hundreds of libraries just like these in Cross Plains and Coleman with dedicated, hardworking staff and volunteers who struggle to meet the often overwhelming needs of their communities with minimal resources. Since 2002 the Loan Star Libraries Program has helped strengthen every accredited public library in Texas and made it possible for them to do a better job of meeting the needs of Texans.

One of the most important community needs that libraries have been called upon to respond to is the need for access to resources for individuals seeking work. We have recently partnered with the Texas Workforce Commission in recognition of the need for widespread community-based education and training opportunities for job seekers in the current economic downturn, and jointly encouraged local libraries and Workforce Development Boards and Workforce Solutions offices to collaborate. We are working together to create workforce development and basic computer skills/technology literacy training sessions that will be delivered locally to help job seekers. Loan Star Libraries Program grants to local libraries help them keep pace with changes in technology and telecommunications so that their public computer centers are as beneficial as possible.

TSLAC's continuing education and consulting services provide much-needed workshops, webinars, and other online training resources that have resulted in more responsible management of library resources and programs across the state. Under

H.B. 1, these services would be eliminated and the Library Development Division would be staffed by only a single employee in 2013.

Continuing Education and Consulting Services are particularly important in Texas because 321 public libraries do not have a staff member with a graduate degree in library or information science, or any other education or training in library management. Most are in smaller, rural communities with few other resources. In Texas, 258 public libraries serve communities with populations under 10,000. Larger libraries in the state also report not having funds for the continuing education needed by their staff.

Continuing Education and Consulting Services staff serve as the state E-rate coordinator for public libraries, which must have certified technology plans for certain federal E-rate funding; manage the 54-year-old *Texas Reading Club* and *Texas Teens Read!*, entering its fourth year; collect and report public and academic library statistics for use in the state and by the federal government; and plan and implement educational programs designed to increase the quality of library services in Texas.

Even if funding for this division is reduced, the agency must keep a basic library assistance program operating to respond to the needs of library directors and their staffs, as they serve the needs of their communities. H.B. 1 directs the agency to dismantle the Continuing Education and Consulting Services program by Dec. 31, 2011.

The agency requests \$3 million over the biennium, a reduction from the current funding level of \$13.4 million and elimination of Rider #7.

Restoration of TSLAC's Capital Budget

We request the restoration of the agency's Capital Budget of \$212,000, of which \$50,000 is General Revenue. These resources would be used to replace computers and peripheral equipment for the public and staff as well as to upgrade and replace network devices.

Library Resource Sharing Programs – K-12 Public School Library Databases

Since 2007, TSLAC has collaborated with the Texas Education Agency to provide access to high quality information databases that support school curricula, meet Texas school library standards, and support the research component of the English Language Arts and Reading TEKS. Research requirements for subjects such as science and social studies may be found in other TEKS. Without student access to quality online information, schools cannot ensure that students will have the skills necessary to achieve success in higher education, training programs, and the workforce. Usage of the K-12 databases has continued to grow since 2007. (See table below.)

K-12 TexShare Usage FY2010	
Database Searches	52,309,261
User Sessions	30,309,504
Documents Served	7,515,279

Prior to 2007, TSLAC negotiated statewide licenses for online content for K-12 public schools, but the school districts had to pay for this content individually. About half the school districts could afford to pay; the others had no access because they could not afford to pay. By dedicating state funds for this purpose, all school children, teachers, and school librarians will have access to these important resources.

The agency requests \$3 million over the biennium, a reduction from the current funding level of \$5 million.

Records Storage Center Fees

The State Records Center provides state agencies with cost-effective storage of non-current, infrequently used state records in hard copy, electronic, and microfilm formats. The Records Center also offers disaster recovery services, including storage of backup computer media and rotation on an individual agency schedule. H.B. 1 instructs TSLAC to offset a reduction in General Revenue for Records Center Services by increasing fees to state agencies for storage. In addition to direct program costs, the fees must cover not only the program administration indirect costs, but also the agency indirect

costs. The amount needed is estimated at \$808,000 and would require a 74 percent increase in the unit cost of hard copy records storage.

TSLAC is concerned that the 85 state agencies currently using Records Center Services will not be able to pay for storage at current rates, much less if storage fees are increased to cover the 43 percent General Revenue reduction. While we understand the need to recover appropriate costs related to providing this service, we believe this scenario will be detrimental to effective records management by Texas state agencies.

Loss of Federal Library Services and Technology Act Funds

Since state General Revenue funds factor into the Match and Maintenance of Effort requirements for federal Library Services and Technology Act funds, reductions in General Revenue have a deleterious impact on the amount of federal library funding Texas will receive in the next few years. By 2013, the Legislative Budget Board predicts a loss of \$8.32 million in LSTA funds; thus, Texas will not receive its fair share of these funds. In addition, important programs and services that are supported by LSTA funds will be shuttered or crippled, including the ten regional Library Systems and the Interlibrary Loan Service.

Conclusion

We understand the need to reduce spending, and we have already made painful cuts this biennium. The restoration of a portion of General Revenue will help the Library and Archives Commission ensure that valuable programs and services are not reduced beyond their ability to recover when the economic climate is more favorable.