

**APPENDIX 5. LETTER FROM NCLIS CHAIRPERSON MARTHA B. GOULD TO
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE NORMAN Y. MINETA, AUGUST 1, 2000**

United States National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

August 1, 2000

The Honorable Norman Mineta
Secretary of Commerce
Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:²⁸⁸

First of all, let me congratulate you on your appointment as the new Secretary of Commerce. Undoubtedly the President can depend on your proven outstanding leadership abilities as a public administrator, sensitive to the needs of both the Congress and the Executive, to assist the Administration to accomplish its remaining goals and objectives. I'm also convinced that you will help to build a solid platform for the future.

I am writing to alert you to a recently concluded study which the United States Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) completed in March of this year, dealing with the planned closure of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). Your Department announced plans in August 1999, to close that agency down, and transfer its resources and programs to the Library of Congress. In our report to the President and the Congress (copy enclosed), we pointed out that the dramatic changes taking place in how, and at what cost, the general public is now able to far more easily and cost-effectively access the Federal Government's vast store of electronic information are not just scientific and technical information (STI) challenges. Rather, the STI challenges are, in reality, a part of the same broad set of issues and concerns with which the entire government is faced, for all kinds of data and information it makes publicly available and accessible.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, chaired by Senator John McCain, requested just such a follow-on study of broad reforms needed in the government's public information dissemination laws and programs, and requested my Commission to undertake the second study. The Committee requested that a final report be submitted by December 15, 2000.

Many other Senate and House committees have also expressed an interest in seeing the results of the study. I have already alerted the President, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy of the study, and wanted to alert you also as you take office. Details of our early planning can be viewed at <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/assess.html>.

We are pleased that a high level former Department official participated actively in the earlier NTIS study to which I alluded above, and we would like to continue that kind of direct working relationship with the Department for the current study. To that end, we would welcome your designation of a

²⁸⁸ Available at <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/mineta1.html> and <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/assess.appen5.pdf>.

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liaison official with whom we can coordinate the study's planning, implementation, and the review of draft final reports. I would appreciate your furnishing me with the name and contact information for this individual at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter and, again, wish you success in your challenging endeavor!

Sincerely yours,

/signed/

Martha Gould
Chairperson

P.S. I know you attended the Washington, D.C. memorial service for Jeanne Hurley Simon, my predecessor as chair of NCLIS. I am sorry that I did not get the chance to meet you then. Jeanne was a strong supporter of broad public access to government information. I know she would be greatly pleased to see you take over the leadership at the Commerce Department (even though you're not from Chicago!)