

APPENDIX 8. REPLY FROM SECRETARY OF COMMERCE NORMAN Y. MINETA TO CHAIRPERSON MARTHA B. GOULD, NOVEMBER 21, 2000

The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

November 21, 2000

Ms. Martha Gould
Chairperson
U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
1110 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 820
Washington, DC 20005-3552

Dear Ms. Gould²⁹² [Martha]²⁹³

Thank you for your letter on the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) and for sharing your concerns about NTIS's hiring freeze.

As you know, last year, NTIS was losing money and facing potential anti-deficiency. In order to restore solvency, the Commerce Department worked with NTIS to place 40 of its employees in other jobs in the Department, thereby enabling NTIS to cut costs and generate a modest surplus. This effort also is enabling NTIS to reconfigure the skills mix of its employees. Over the past year, we have carefully monitored the financial situation at NTIS, and in order to stabilize the situation, we have allowed the agency to hire the resources it required on a contract basis. Due to these cost-saving measures, NTIS has sufficient resources at this time to proceed with a small number of full-time hires in critical areas. We continue, however, to have concerns about the long-term viability of NTIS, which have been confirmed by a recent General Accounting Office report.

I look forward to NCLIS's Study of Public Information Dissemination Reforms. This is an important subject and deserves an in-depth examination. Technology is changing information dissemination and government institutions must reflect that change. I encourage you to take a broad look at reform and make recommendations that reflect present day realities and will carry us into the future.

Sincerely yours,

/signed/

Norman Y. Mineta

²⁹² Secretary Mineta's letter is available at <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/mineta11-00.pdf> (as a scanned image) and also at <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/assess.appen8.pdf> (as an appendix to this report).

²⁹³ This is hand written over the salutation in the letter.