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Congress of the United States

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August 1, 2000

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
441 G St, N.W.
Washington D.C., 20548

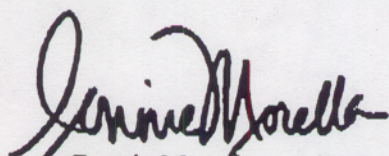
Dear Mr. Walker:

In August 1999, the Secretary of Commerce proposed to close the National Technical Information Service by September 2000 because he believed that declining sales revenues soon would not be sufficient to recover all of NTIS' operating costs. NTIS' financial condition was further confirmed in a recent GAO report that stated that NTIS may be able to remain self-sufficient for a few years, but its solvency beyond fiscal year 2003 remains in doubt.

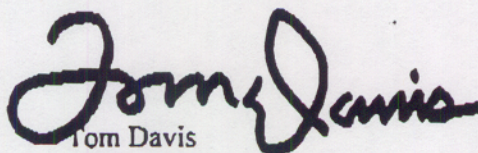
I am very concerned that any decision concerning the future of NTIS be based on an objective analysis of the facts. As a result, I am requesting that GAO perform a comprehensive study of the functions performed by the NTIS. I am interested in identifying both the repository functions that NTIS performs as well as other functions, such as maintaining web sites for other agencies. I am also interested in determining the size, age, and demand trends for NTIS's holdings in its repository and the extent to which these holdings are readily available from individual federal agencies or other entities. Finally, I would like to know whether federal agencies are complying with the law requiring their research reports to be provided to NTIS and the major cause of any noncompliance.

We would like you to provide the results of this study by mid-February so that we can take appropriate action in the next Congress before NTIS becomes insolvent. If you have further questions concerning this request, please contact Melissa Wojciak of my staff at 225-6751 or Randal Kaplan of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology staff at 225-5147.

Sincerely,



Connie Morella
Chairman
Subcommittee on Technology



Tom Davis
Chairman
Subcommittee on District of Columbia