



American Society of Plant Biologists

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ASPB Does Not Endorse the Research Works Act

The American Society of Plant Biologists wishes to inform its membership; individuals and institutions subscribing to its two journals, *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell*; and the scholarly community at large that it does not endorse the Research Works Act (RWA; H.R. 3699), which was introduced into the U.S. Congress late last year. If the RWA were to become law, it would essentially repeal the NIH public access mandate, via which articles derived from NIH funding must be publicly released on the PubMed Central website within 12 months of publication, and forbid future implementation of any similar mandates at other agencies.

In large part, ASPB's strong reservations regarding the RWA stem from the fact that the collaborative and inclusive approach articulated in an existing public law – the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ358/html/PLAW-111publ358.htm>) – represents a far more appropriate path forward, one that takes into consideration the needs and wants of all stakeholders, including publishers. The process envisioned in COMPETES is already under way and beginning to bear fruit, and ASPB is privileged to be participating in preliminary conversations regarding U.S. federal agency objectives regarding public access to research. Moreover, ASPB determined many years ago that it would be consistent with both the Society's mission and its business needs to publicly release the entire content of both journals 12 months after an issue's publication. It has been doing so for over a decade, both via the journals' own websites and on the PubMed Central site. In the meantime, ASPB continues to experiment with and explore novel approaches toward expanding access to its journals' content, including very-low-cost article rental models and a membership-based free access option.

Although unilateral imposition of public release time frames is not an appropriate way to achieve public access, ASPB feels that the tenor, tone, and timing of the RWA are unhelpful and that the bill is unnecessary at this time.

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