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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY

March 24, 2009

To:

Committee on Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
USA

Subj.: Support for NIH Public Access Policy

To the Honorable Representative John Conyers, Jr.,

On behalf of the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB), we are writing to express our long-standing and strong support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Public Access Policy. We assume that the U.S. government funds research with the expectation that new ideas and discoveries from the research will propel science, stimulate the economy, and improve the lives and welfare of those living within its reach. As experts in an interdisciplinary field, we realize the advantages of transparency every day and constantly work toward increasing the transparency of our contribution.

Scientific research is advanced by broad dissemination of knowledge, and the subsequent building upon the work of others. To this end, the NIH Public Access Policy ensures that the \$29 billion annual investment in biomedical research reaches a broader audience. The Policy requires that, in exchange for receiving federal research dollars, grantees deposit the final electronic manuscript of their peer-reviewed research results into PubMed Central, NIH's digital archive, to be made publicly available within 12 months after publication elsewhere.

The Policy achieves several notable goals: First, it ensures broad public access to results funded by the NIH. This facilitates international collaborations and cutting-edge research and it also acts as a "leveler," expanding the potential user base, allowing for greater sharing of information and the spurring of medical advances and innovations.

Second, the Policy ensures that the U.S. government has a long-term permanent archive of NIH funded research results. This archive of critical biomedical research ensures that scientists and others can build on the work of others now and for future generations.

Finally, it provides welcome accountability and transparency to the government, and assists the NIH in better managing our investments in its research portfolio. This will, over time, contribute toward better health care both here and abroad by accelerating the pace of research. At the direction of Congress, the NIH Public Access Policy was revised to require that NIH grantees deposit their manuscripts in lieu of doing so voluntarily. We are aware of key funding organizations in several other countries that are discussing similar steps. The Wellcome Trust in

England has spearheaded a similar requirement for the research funded by its resources, and the Max Planck Society in Germany achieved similar goals as those pursued by the NIH by paying for all open access publications from any of its institutes.

Since the Policy became mandatory in early April of 2008, the deposit rate has increased from 10% to almost 60%. This change ensures that the more than 80,000 articles resulting from NIH funding each year will, for the first time, be available to any researcher, physician, faculty member, student or member of the public who wants access.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the NIH Public Access Policy continues to serve science, the research community and the public.

Sincerely,



*Prof. Burkhard Rost, ISCB President and Chairman of the Board  
For and on behalf of the International Society for Computational Biology  
Executive and Public-Affairs & Policies Committees:*

*Prof. Michal Linial, ISCB Vice President  
Prof. Terry Gaasterland, ISCB Vice President  
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