

January 16, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

ASAE, which is the largest organization in the nation representing the interests of trade and professional associations, urges your administration to reconsider a proposed policy that would negatively impact the ability of many scientific societies to continue to publish scientific journals. A potential policy by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) would force the immediate free publication of peer-reviewed journal articles, eliminating the right of journals to charge for access to those articles to recoup the investments made in peer review, curation and conducting quality control. Many associations are accommodating the 2013 OSTP policy mandating that research created with public funds be made available within a 12-month period. A modification to this policy that doesn't consider the impact it would have on researchers and scientific associations would significantly injure the viability of peer-reviewed journals in the future.

This change would deprive journals of revenue that makes peer review of scientific research results and publication of those results possible. As a result, the proposed policy change would disrupt the private marketplace, increase the cost of publication for researchers and prevent billions of dollars of U.S. exports that are based on this country's leadership in scientific and technological advances. Net revenue from these journals not only supports the peer review process, but also many other vital association activities including education, outreach and membership services provided through societies and associations.

ASAE represents more than 46,000 association professionals and industry partners. Our members manage leading trade associations, individual membership societies and voluntary organizations across the United States and in nearly 50 countries around the world. ASAE members are on the forefront of scientific innovation in the United States and abroad and serve a critical role making the U.S. smarter and safer.

Associations from every discipline make a significant financial investment to support peer review and publication of these articles. Many journals permit at no additional charge members of the relevant professional society to have instant access to the scientific articles, thus ensuring that fellow researchers do have immediate access to findings of federally funded research, but journals rely on the revenues from subscriptions from institutions and non-members to continue operating. The 12-month embargo period is critical to providing the financial stability for societies to manage the peer review process to ensure high quality and reliable scientific publications. A change of this nature would be devastating to the development and dissemination of scientific and technical information as it could endanger the sustainability of many journals, closing off respected avenues for scientists who receive

federal funding to share the results of their research with other members of the profession and the public. Rather than speeding and strengthening the flow of scientific knowledge, the proposed change would instead reduce the publications available to disseminate that research, and would impair the quality of research findings by closing doors to the peer review process. The effects of the resulting drought in peer-reviewed research findings would reach far beyond academic and research institutions and stifle technological and entrepreneurial innovation.

I strongly urge the administration to reconsider making changes to this proposed policy. If ASAE can be of assistance, please contact Mary Kate Cunningham, Vice President of Public Policy, at mcunningham@asaecenter.org or 202.626.2787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Robertson".

Susan Robertson, CAE
Interim President and CEO

CC:

The Honorable Kelvin Droegemeier, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy