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President Robert King  
Council on Post Secondary Education  
1024 Capital Center Drive  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear President King:

I am writing you today to voice my concerns about the possible impacts of another 6% reduction for the Kentucky Virtual Library. After reading the November 13, 2009 *Courier-Journal* "Beshear asks some agencies to plan for 6 percent cuts" article I realized that this could impact the already painfully thin resources available to support the Kentucky Virtual Library.

The KYVL Virtual Library Advisory Committee just finished reviewing a variety of options to cover the nearly \$150,000 deficit caused by the 4% budget cut that was retrospective to July 2009. Our Committee was committed to maintaining the current level of service and access to information necessary to fuel the education of Kentuckians who use KYVL services throughout the state through all access points. Therefore, we chose to increase member fees to accommodate the deficit.

We know that budget challenges are inevitable during these trying economic times. However, education is one of the key infrastructures necessary to ensure the future health of our economy. The dichotomy of cutting funding for resources that fuel education and business innovation is difficult to understand.

I think it is extremely important for you and your office to understand the impact that cutting KYVL would have on education at all levels within the state.

During Fiscal Year 2008-09 KYVL users at libraries from universities, colleges, public libraries and remotely conducted over 20 million searches.

- Nearly 3 million of those searches were at the K-12 Level.
- Special Libraries made up of members from hospitals and other special institutions that rely on current, accurate, high-quality information conducted nearly 223,000 searches.

The databases used to conduct those searches contain high quality medical, career, business and news data that ensures the right information makes it to business decision levels within a variety of organizations.

KYVL's purchasing power makes available 265 million records within 21,559 unique titles in 25 databases to libraries and information users throughout the state. This information is used to fuel business decisions and economic progress, educational development and high-impact research.

The notion that all information is free and available and usable through the Internet is a misinformed notion. KYVL's databases are used to deliver content from *Journal of Nursing*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Financial Times (FT)*, *Kirkus Review*, *Social Work* as well as the top 5 used titles: *USA Today*, *The Washington Times*, *Toronto Star*, *Scientific American* and *The*

*Economist.* The databases provide reliable, accurate access to pertinent data for Kentucky's researchers.

Reducing the access to KYVL databases will directly impact the educational institutions and special libraries throughout the state. These databases are used and depended upon by the state's library users. In fiscal year 2008-09 the state benefited from KYVL's resources and demonstrated a strong reliance upon same as shown by the unique searches outlined below. I doubt that the demand for access will decrease in 2009-2010.

- o Government Agencies (KDLA and other state agencies): 27,386
- o KCTCS: 1,967,382
- o Public K12: 3,153,831
- o AIKCU - private academic: 3,140,926
- o Public Libraries: 686,471
- o Private K12: 118,003
- o Public Universities: 8,892,050
- o Special Academic: 1,885,657
- o Special Libraries: 222,984

KYVL Databases cover a variety of topics. Some are aggregate databases that gather a wealth of scholarly publications such as *Academic Search Premier*, others are specialized medical and career databases, and some are encyclopedic and reference databases. The specialized databases have a lower usage rate but the information contained within those databases is unique and relied upon by researchers within relevant fields. All provide support for the Commonwealth's citizens to educate, answer research needs and use information to contribute to the daily cycle of business.

I have personally benefited from access to the databases through my public library while authoring my recently published book. Individual use of KYVL is duplicated throughout the state at levels that we can never be fully aware. What we can realize is that this type of positive engagement and tangible result contributes to the economic stimulus necessary to recover from the current recession.

The value that KYVL brings through their Database collection is great compared to the per use cost (2008-09) ranging from \$0.19 to \$42.87 (PsychInfo -- a very specialized database of Psychological and Medical content). This particular database is an extremely valuable resource that KYVL's buying power makes accessible to its members and prompted the Advisory Committee to endorse a member fee increase so as not to place this resource on the chopping block.

- o 18 databases cost \$0.19 per full-text document
- o 1 costs \$3.27
- o 1 costs \$2.85
- o 1 costs \$0.47
- o 1 costs \$0.50

The value provided by KYVL actually benefits the state in other financial means. The state's 8 public universities would pay \$1,494,704 to acquire the same 25 licensed databases provided via Kentucky Virtual Library and per use cost would be 16 cents each as compared to the 2 cents per search through KYVL.

KCTCS would pay \$1,460,833 retail if each college library purchased the research databases independently. Due to KYVL's resource sharing and collective purchasing the cost to provide valuable information to KCTCS is approximately \$35,000.

In addition to the databases that KYVL provides, an intrastate ground courier service for public and public postsecondary libraries is made available. This service pays for the transport of textbooks, lab kits, books, videos, and more to be moved between libraries throughout the Commonwealth. The cost for this service is \$313,664.

- o In FY2008-09, 206,367 items moved through the service.
  - o If these same items were to be shipped at the low cost library rate of \$3 per item, the cost would be \$619,101.

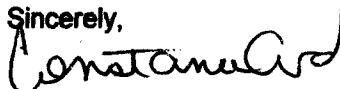
KYVL is now 10 years old. The Strategic Planning process that is currently underway has reaffirmed that KYVL is the state agency that promotes education and resource sharing for the citizens in the Commonwealth in a manner that cannot be duplicated by another institution within the organization.

The mission of KYVL is to "provide all Kentuckians with equitable access to library resources and to a common foundation of quality online information for lifelong learning, working and living." The impact of a 6% budget cut would be the lack of equitable access to library resources that meet the criteria of quality online information for lifelong learning, working and living.

KYVL's resources support another state agency that is subject to this 6% cut. The Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives is a vital service for our public libraries and their budget too should be protected. In this time of economic struggle and job losses, the public library is a community resource for job hunting, preparation and skills building unmatched by any other state offering.

As Chair of the Kentucky Virtual Library's Advisory Committee and Special Library Representative, I ask you to please help preserve KYVL from additional budget cuts. I strongly encourage you to place a request with Governor Beshear and State Budget Director Mary Lassiter to exempt the Kentucky Virtual Library from any and all budget cuts including the 6% cut currently being considered.

Sincerely,



Constance Ard  
Chair, KYVL-Virtual Library Advisory Committee  
Louisville, KY

**Endorsed by:**

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