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## **GPO STATEMENT REGARDING OMB MEMO ON PRINTING AND DUPLICATING**

Federal law (section 501 of Title 44 of the United States Code) generally requires executive branch agencies to use GPO for their printing needs. OMB Memorandum M-02-07, "Procurement of Printing and Duplicating Through the Government Printing Office" (May 3, 2002), is an attempt to transfer printing authority to executive branch agencies themselves.

To accomplish the change, the OMB memorandum asks that the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)-the rules under which executive branch agencies obtain goods and services-be revised. Presumably, a revision to the FAR will be preceded by a period of public notice and comment, so the policy announced in the OMB memorandum will not take effect immediately. Beyond that, it is not clear how Federal agencies would behave if the FAR revision is implemented and the law governing Federal printing remains unchanged.

The OMB memorandum echoes earlier unsuccessful efforts in 1987 and 1994 to transfer printing authority to executive branch agencies. Congress did not support the change either time because of the strong potential in a decentralized system of printing for:

- **significant cost increases in Federal printing;**
- **lost contracting opportunities by the small businesses that dominate the U.S. printing industry; and**

- **reduced public access to Government information through Federal depository libraries.**

These same concerns apply to OMB's latest policy.

When agencies use GPO, they benefit from a package of support services that keeps their printing costs at the lowest possible level. These services are provided by GPO's competitive printing procurement program working in long-standing partnership with 10,000 - 12,000 private sector printing firms nationwide. Long hailed as one of the Federal Government's most successful purchasing efforts, the program has been characterized by the independent firm of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc., as "an example of government at its best."

After agency publications are printed, GPO works in another long-standing partnership with the American library community to ensure that they are cataloged and indexed and made widely available for the free use of the American public through 1,300 Federal depository libraries around the Nation. The Federal Depository Library Program traces its roots to 1813, and has been called "America's first freedom of information act."

Public Printer Michael F. DiMario has notified all GPO employees that "unless and until this FAR change is in place and the resulting conflict with [current law governing Federal printing] is resolved, all existing and pending work on behalf of executive branch agency customers will be carried out as usual, in accordance with existing law, regulation, policy, and procedures. All existing arrangements for the distribution of documents to Federal depository libraries and through other statutory distribution programs operated by GPO will also be continued."

DiMario also said: "I encourage all GPO organizations supporting our printing and printing procurement efforts for executive branch agencies to continue providing our customers with the best possible service at the most economical price. We have longstanding, productive partnerships with our customer agencies, the printing industry, and the library community, and our responsibilities under those partnerships will be upheld. Our customer agencies and the public depend on us for the work we do, and we won't let them down."

For addition information about GPO, see our Web site, [www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov).

(Self-Mailer)