

The Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act of 2013

Background: Every year, the federal government funds tens of billions of dollars in basic and applied research. Most of this funding is concentrated within 11 departments/agencies (e.g. National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Energy). This research results in a significant number of articles being published each year – approximately 90,000 papers are published annually as result of NIH funding alone.

Because U.S. taxpayers directly fund this research, they have a right to expect that its *distribution* and *use* will be maximized, and that they themselves will have access to it.

The government funds research with the expectation that new ideas and discoveries resulting from that research will advance science, stimulate innovation, grow the economy, and improve the lives and welfare of Americans. The Internet makes it possible to advance these goals by providing public online access to federally funded research, and has revolutionized information sharing by enabling prompt sharing of the latest advances with every scientist, physician, educator, entrepreneur and citizen.

One of the crucial challenges faced by industry today is gaining quick access to research for commercial application, to spur investment in the development of new and innovative products. Businesses – small and large – need faster access to this information to be competitive in the global marketplace.

At a time of soaring deficits, additional transparency is also needed to ensure that federal dollars are allocated and spent efficiently.

The Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act is bipartisan-supported legislation that:

✓ *Spurs Innovation and Encourages Job Creation:*

- Faster commercialization ***spurs economic growth, creating new jobs*** across broad sectors of the economy – from the biotech sector to agriculture to energy to publishing.
- Faster access to and full reuse of research articles helps individuals and businesses to apply ideas generated from this research into their development cycles and ***speeds the launch of new services and products*** into the marketplace.
- ***Encourages private investment*** in information technology to capitalize on a government resource – a proven strength of the U.S. economy.
- Creates ***opportunities for companies*** to build on public data feeds, and to develop private-sector information services, such as Google Scholar and goPubMed.

✓ *Provides Additional Transparency on Federal Spending:*

- Wider communication of research findings and increased access to data on cost-benefit measures supports **informed, transparent** federal budget and policy decision-making.
- It ensures a **higher return on taxpayer investment** – preliminary modeling suggests that the potential **incremental benefits** of the proposed FASTR archiving approach could be **worth around 8 times the costs.**¹

✓ **Expands Access to Taxpayer-Funded Information:** Under FASTR, every federal agency with an annual extramural research budget of \$100 million or more will implement a public-access policy that is consistent with and advances the federal purpose of the respective agency. Each agency must:

- Require each researcher – funded totally or partially by the agency – to **submit an electronic copy of the final manuscript** that has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
- **Ensure that the manuscript is preserved** in a stable digital repository maintained by that agency or in another suitable repository that delivers permanent free public access, interoperability, and long-term preservation.
- **Require that free, online access** to each taxpayer-funded manuscript be available as soon as possible, and **no later than six months after the article has been published** in a peer-reviewed journal, and that the public have the ability to fully use these articles in the digital environment.

The public-access policy applies to:

- Any researcher **employed** by a federal agency with an annual research budget exceeding \$100 million who publishes an article based on the work done for the funding agency in a peer-reviewed journal.
- Any researcher **funded** by a federal agency with an annual research budget exceeding \$100 million who publishes an article based on the funded research in a peer-reviewed journal.

✓ **Includes Appropriate Protections for Classified Research, Royalty-Generating Works, and Preliminary Data:**

- The public-access policy **does not apply** to laboratory notes, preliminary data analyses, author notes, phone logs, or other information used to produce the final manuscript.
- The policy **does not apply** to classified research, research that results in works that generate revenue or royalties for the author (such as books), or patentable discoveries to the extent necessary to protect copyright or a patent.

¹ Houghton, J., Rasmussen, R. and Sheehan, P. 2010, [Economic and Social Returns on Investment in Open Archiving Publicly Funded Research Outputs](#)