July 28, 2015

Dear Senator Johnson:

I write in strong support of the amended version of S. 779, the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act of 2015, which would make articles resulting from publicly funded scientific research available to the public, industry, and the scientific community. It is my understanding that mark-up is scheduled for Wednesday, July 29.

As you know, the federal government invests almost $39 billion annually in university research, an investment that produces tremendous benefits for Wisconsin and the nation. Evidence of this investment can be seen across the University of Wisconsin System. In 2013-14, University of Wisconsin System institutions engaged in approximately $911.5 million in federally-funded research. Nowhere is that federal funding and investment more prominent than at UW-Madison, which consistently ranks among the top universities nationwide in national research expenditures.

Expanding public access to federally-funded research is critical not only to ensure effective dissemination of new knowledge, but to also allow the public, that funds federal research, to see its results. I am pleased that this legislation includes a provision that would replace the six-month embargo period with “no later than 12 months, but preferably sooner,” and provides a mechanism for stakeholders to petition federal agencies to “adjust” the embargo period if the 12-month period does not serve the public, industries and the scientific community – both modifications sought by the American Association of Universities (AAU), the American Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and others. This brings the embargo period into line with the Office of Science and Technology Policy Directive and the National Institutes of Health Public Access Policy.

Thank you for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kristine D. Andrews
Associate Vice President for Federal and Corporate Relations