

Chairperson Barrett and members of the committee. My name is Tom Sloan and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System, which is headquartered in Poughkeepsie.

MHLS 66 member libraries are located in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, and Ulster counties, an area of approximately 3,000 square miles. Our service area includes the 106th District, which is represented by the Honorable Chair of this Committee and is home to 16 public libraries.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you information about the services Mid-Hudson provides member libraries.

We are a “cooperative” library system, meaning that our member libraries work together and Mid-Hudson acts as the facilitator to find cost effective solutions for the delivery of quality library services. Through our cooperative efforts we save millions of dollars annually – a smart model for the delivery of shared services that merits increased investment by the State.

My remarks will primarily focus on 3 highly cost effective services and several person-to-person services Mid-Hudson provides member libraries and the communities they serve.

More than 280,000 residents of the Mid-Hudson area have library cards and access to a shared public library collection of more than 2.4 million items. One of the cost effective services Mid-Hudson provides is a state-of-the-art computer-based library information system which includes our public-facing shared online catalog. The online catalog supports finding and borrowing all types of materials held by all 66 libraries. Last year residents borrowed more than 3.8 million items using our shared library system. The sharing of the library information system is highly cost effective.

We have conducted a detailed cost analysis of our current service versus the cost of the service if organized on a county based model. Annually, Mid-Hudson spends approximately \$340,000 for the shared library information system which is used by all 66 libraries in five counties. If each county negotiated for this service on their own, the cost quickly adds up to more than \$1.1 million per year. State funding to Mid-Hudson for the library information system provides economies of scale that reduces cost and improves services.

A second highly cost effective service Mid-Hudson provides is the physical delivery of library materials to 66 member libraries. Last year, Mid-Hudson delivered more than 1 million items to Member Libraries. These shared resources have a value of more than \$12 million dollars. We have also conducted a detailed cost analysis of our current delivery services compared to libraries providing these services through other delivery vendors. Last year, Mid-Hudson spent approximately \$650,000 to deliver 1 million library items to 66 libraries. The United States Postal Service cost would be more than \$4.5 million per year. The United Parcel Service cost would be more than \$8.8 million per year. Using the lower of the two figures indicates we are

providing a savings of over \$3.8 million annually. State funding to Mid-Hudson for providing delivery services to libraries provides economies of scale that reduces cost and improves services.

A relatively new and very popular service is the provision of ebooks and eaudiobooks, which are delivered to patrons' Internet connected device or computer. Mid-Hudson manages the negotiation with E-Resource vendors, insuring the best possible price for the service delivered. We are financially struggling to meet patron demands for E-Resources. We have had a 21% increase in use of e-books and e-audiobooks in just the past year. Patron borrowing of the E-Resources represents a share service value of more than \$3.5 million.

Additional popular shared E-Resources include: Mango languages which prepares learners for realistic conversations and strengthens everyday communication skills in over 70 world languages; TumbleBooks which provides more than 1,100 titles of children's e-books including talking picture books, read-along chapter books, and books in Spanish; and Consumer Reports which provides evidence-based testing and ratings of thousands of products. We have conducted a detail cost analysis of Mid-Hudson licensing these E-Resources for all 66 member libraries compared to a county based licensing model. Mid-Hudson saves libraries more than \$400,000 per year through group purchases & collective licensing.

I have highlighted the cost effectiveness of Mid-Hudson providing: a state-of-the-art computer-based library information system with more than 2.4 million items; the delivery of more than 1 million library items between 66 member libraries; and shared E-Resources including highly popular eBooks and eAudiobooks. These are just three services that illustrate how by working cooperatively we are maximizing State funds.

To conclude my testimony, I will highlight several of the essential person to person services Mid-Hudson provides. We work closely with our member library directors to provide them with a wide range of information on library operations, management, and community engagement. We work with more than 600 public library trustees to support their work in the areas of library governance, fiscal management, and planning activities. And, we provide high quality continuing education and professional development for library staff and trustees. These services, centralized at the System, ensure all libraries have access to specialists who know and understand their library and their community's needs. This level of support would be out of reach for most of our member libraries without the State funding these services. By working together we can achieve cost efficiencies that allow libraries of all sizes to thrive.

Mid-Hudson and our 66 member libraries are providing cost effective services to hundreds of thousands of people living in communities both large and small. These successful shared services are made possible by State Library Aid, which is a budget line that has not kept up with advancements in technology and patrons demands. Investing in New York's Public Library Systems is a cost effective solution for maximizing state support for all New York public



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libraries. We are asking you to support increasing Library Aid from the current \$95.9M to \$100M. These funds will be investments in cooperation, expanding economies of scale, and serving persons of all ages in communities of all sizes.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Rebekkah Smith Aldrich who will speak to the impact of the State Aid for Library Construction Program in our region.