



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:

*“The State of Scientific Publishing:
Assessing Trends, Emerging Issues, and Policy Considerations”*

April 15, 2026

Thank you Chairman McCormick and Ranking Member Sykes for holding this hearing and good morning to the distinguished panel of witnesses. As some of you know, scientific publishing – and, in particular, open access – is a topic I have cared about and studied for a long time.

I have been a cosponsor of the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research - or FASTR Act – since it was first introduced in 2013. Prior to that, in 2010, I cosponsored the Federal Research Public Access Act. Both of these bills had the goal of accelerating free public access to the results of taxpayer funded research. Congress has failed to act on these bills. On the other hand, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy under President Obama took a leap forward in Federal policy with Dr. John Holdren’s 2013 memo calling on agencies to implement a maximum 12-month embargo on all Federally funded research papers. In her 2022 memo, Dr. Alondra Nelson – as acting OSTP director under President Biden - carried the ball even further toward the finish line.

We can and should have a healthy debate about how we get to the goal of immediate and free access to the results of Federally funded research. I hope we do not disagree about the goal itself. I will remind anyone in the room who needs to hear this.

The research was paid for by the public. The intellectual value is created by the scientists and students doing the research. The peer reviewers are other scientists donating their time.

To be clear, I also believe that publishers have long played a valuable role in the scientific communication ecosystem. In the 20th Century, it could have been argued they played an irreplaceable role. But this isn’t 1925 or even 1995 anymore, and we must be open to new frameworks for communication and new business models. To the credit of many in the publishing community - of their own accord or perhaps pushed along by the open access advocates - a lot has changed already. In particular, I recognize the multiples ways in which scholarly societies add value to the scientific ecosystem, from conferences, to mentoring and professional development for students and early career scientists, to public outreach.

Unfortunately, there are publishers who are doing a disservice to U.S. taxpayers, U.S. scientists and even to other publishers who are trying to do the right thing. These publishers are rapidly losing the overpriced subscriptions they long depended on for their massive profits, so they are implementing extortionist page charges instead. They are exploiting new ways to monetize the full research cycle – even information about scientists intended to be private. For example, a few years ago Elsevier bought an academic technology company called Interfolio so that they can repackage and sell information about Federally funded science and scientists back to Federal agencies. And for all we know, given the absence of any transparency or guardrails, they may be selling this same proprietary data to China.

I recognize that building new business models in the age of the internet and now AI is not easy for 100 plus year-old nonprofit organizations. I remain a ready and willing partner to nonprofit scholarly societies struggling to find their footing in this new world. But I will not stand idly by as a select few for-profit companies continue to exploit U.S. taxpayers, U.S. scientists and potentially put at risk U.S. economic and national security to line their own pockets.

This is an incredibly nuanced issue. Thoughtful advocates for open access have valuable recommendations for how open access can address the many challenges identified in this hearing scope. To that end, I request unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from SPARC.

This hearing is wide-ranging in scope – all fascinating and important topics. I hope in addition to the breadth, we can go deep on at least some of these important topics.

I yield back.