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Thank you for permitting me to address you today.

My name is Sara Dallas. I am the Executive Director of the Southern Adirondack Library System and a trustee of the Albany Public Library.

The primary purpose of public library systems is to share resources between member libraries. This sharing is made possible by balancing the ethical framework of privacy, security, and functionality with the public's need for access.

Cooperative library systems work with member libraries to create agreements and policies.

The Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) and the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) began a cooperative Joint Automation Project (JA) in 1983 to help public libraries in our service area take advantage of economies of scale, share resources responsibly, and prove ourselves to be responsible stewards of public funds.

For 41 years, the Joint Automation Project has consistently delivered benefits to member libraries in both systems. A shared delivery system has facilitated easy access and broadened the range of materials available to patrons. This reliable and valuable access has enriched the lives of the people in Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, and Schoharie counties, where the project has been a resounding success.

Our practices are not set in stone. They evolve and change over time, but always with the consent of JA members who collectively set the policy. This collaborative approach ensures that every voice is heard and that we all share in the responsibility and success of the Joint Automation Project.

It is crucial to understand that one person, even an MVLS or SALS Executive Director, cannot unilaterally change these policies. Our role is to enforce--not make--policy for the JA, a project that has proven to be a game-changer in our service area, benefiting our libraries and the communities they serve.

The Schenectady County Public Library has a staff member on the JA policy committee who also served as Chair of the JA. The concerns were never brought to the appropriate committee or the Council for discussion and review.

I request that the Upper Hudson board carefully consider these factors before enabling a library to abandon this carefully balanced approach by granting ILS access after deciding the terms of its current ILS were too rigorous.

In the 60-year tradition of public library systems in New York State, there have been no examples of a library system interfering with resource sharing in a neighboring system.

By enabling this interference, UHLS risks damaging resource sharing for all MVLS and SALS libraries and introducing unnecessary complications into basic system functions like e-resources, interlibrary loans, and delivery. We are convinced that there will be serious consequences for UHLS services as well.

We also believe that if this is seen as a viable option, other libraries across the state could be pressured by their municipalities to stop using the services of their cooperative library system.

The SALS board believes that approving this proposal without a deep examination of the consequences will have far-reaching ramifications for libraries and systems throughout New York State, damage existing resource-sharing protocols, and could end public library systems as we have known them.

Don't hesitate to contact SALS with any questions. We would happily provide additional information and discuss these issues with you.