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## **House of Commons Committee Endorses Open Access to Scientific and Medical Research**

***Public Library of Science responds to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report "Scientific Publications: Free for All?"***

**July 19, 2004, SAN FRANCISCO** -- The report released today by the Science and Technology Committee of the United Kingdom's House of Commons, "Scientific Publications: Free for All?" insists that the "published output" of UK higher education institutions must be made available such that "it can be read, free of charge, online," and provides a practical roadmap for achieving this goal.

"The report makes clear that open access is the only acceptable outcome for publicly funded science," said Public Library of Science [PLoS] co-founder Dr. Michael B. Eisen, "and challenges scientists, publishers and research funders to make open access happen rapidly."

According to the report, "It is not for either publishers or academics to decide who should, and who should not, be allowed to read scientific journals." The report dismisses arguments made by publishers against open-access publishing, and urges the government to take concrete actions in support of open access.

In conjunction with other recent developments in the UK and the United States, this report suggests an international consensus growing in support of the open access movement. Last week, the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives recommended that the NIH immediately develop a policy to make the results of research it funds free online. The UK's Wellcome Trust and the US's Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the two largest private funders of biomedical research in the world, have both endorsed open-access publishing as well. Taken together, these actions amount to a stinging rebuke of the prevailing subscription-based publishing system in science and medicine, and a recognition of the need for immediate change.

Eisen added, "The report from the House of Commons committee and the bill passed by the US House committee are a call-to-action. Both have made clear the need for better access to publicly funded scientific works, and both have offered concrete mechanisms for achieving it."

PLoS contributed evidence to the parliamentary inquiry in the form of a written submission, and the testimony of PLoS co-founder and Chairman of the Board, Dr. Harold Varmus, Nobel laureate in Physiology or Medicine.

## About PLoS

The Public Library of Science [PLoS] is a non-profit organization of scientists and physicians committed to making the world's scientific and medical research a public resource. PLoS publishes open-access journals of original peer-reviewed research, including PLoS Biology and PLoS Medicine, which are available for free to anyone in the world with a connection to the Internet. Visit [www.plos.org](http://www.plos.org) for more information.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: To pre-arrange interviews or for more information,** contact Cynthia Blair at 415.624.1218 or [cblair@plos.org](mailto:cblair@plos.org). For more documentation pertaining to the open access movement, see <http://www.plos.org/about/openaccess.html>. Further information on the Committee can be obtained from Committee staff at 020 7219 2793/4.

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