

## **Office of Digital Collections (Introduced in Senate)**

### **A BILL**

To establish an Office of Digital Collections in the Department of Commerce, and for other purposes advancing the production and use of digital information.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that*

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the ‘Digital Collections Act of 2008’.

### **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

It is the purpose of this Act to advance the digitizing of cultural and natural science collections and the coordinated, effective and efficient use of digital data produced.

### **SEC. 3. OFFICE OF DIGITAL CULTURAL AND NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS.**

(a) Establishment- There is hereby established in the Department of Commerce an Office of Digital Collections (hereinafter “Office”).

(b) Personnel- The Office shall be headed by a Director for Digital Collections, shall have such staff as may be necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the Office, and shall report to the Under Secretary for Technology at the same organizational level as the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy, the Director of the National Technical Information Service, and the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(c) Functions- The Office shall advance the electronic storage, retrieval and use of cultural and biological information held in museum, university, and other private collections that offer public access. The responsibilities of the Office shall include, but shall not be limited to:

1. Promoting and conducting the systematic digitization of priority physical collections,
2. Advancing research and development towards the efficient and cost effective use of contemporary information technologies for imaging, scanning and other

- collection data digitizing, archiving, synthesis, mining, on-line access, and interchange capabilities across all sectors,
3. Promoting and assisting in the development of metadata and taxonomic standards for legacy collections, to assure international and sector data compatibility,
  4. Facilitating the digital integration of data, artifacts, and museum specimens with geospatial data, through mechanisms such as geographic information systems and satellite imagery, to add value to information and to advance research and new applications,
  5. Creating partnerships between the collection and technology communities, both public and private, to advance scientific discoveries and applications of these digital data within and across institutions, and
  6. Developing and conducting training programs for native peoples, naturalists, and the greater user community to use digital collections data in their decision making processes.

(d) The Office of Digital Collections shall report every four years to Congress on its accomplishments and in that report shall set forth the specific goals and needs of the Office for the next four years.

#### **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

There are authorized to be appropriated \$50 million for fiscal year 2008 and in each fiscal year thereafter to carry out the provisions of this Act.

#### **SEC. 5. COOPERATION WITH THE OFFICE OF DIGITAL CULTURAL AND NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS.**

The heads of the departments and agencies of the United States shall cooperate with the Office in advancing the purpose of this Act, and shall as feasible conduct independent research and development programs to advance the digitization of collections and use of digital information. Such agencies and departments shall, to the extent permitted by law, integrate means to advance digitization in the work of other public and private entities that they fund or whose work they authorize. In carrying out its work, the Office shall coordinate with the collections community, associations and societies, and leading national and international cultural and biological informatics and taxonomic initiatives.