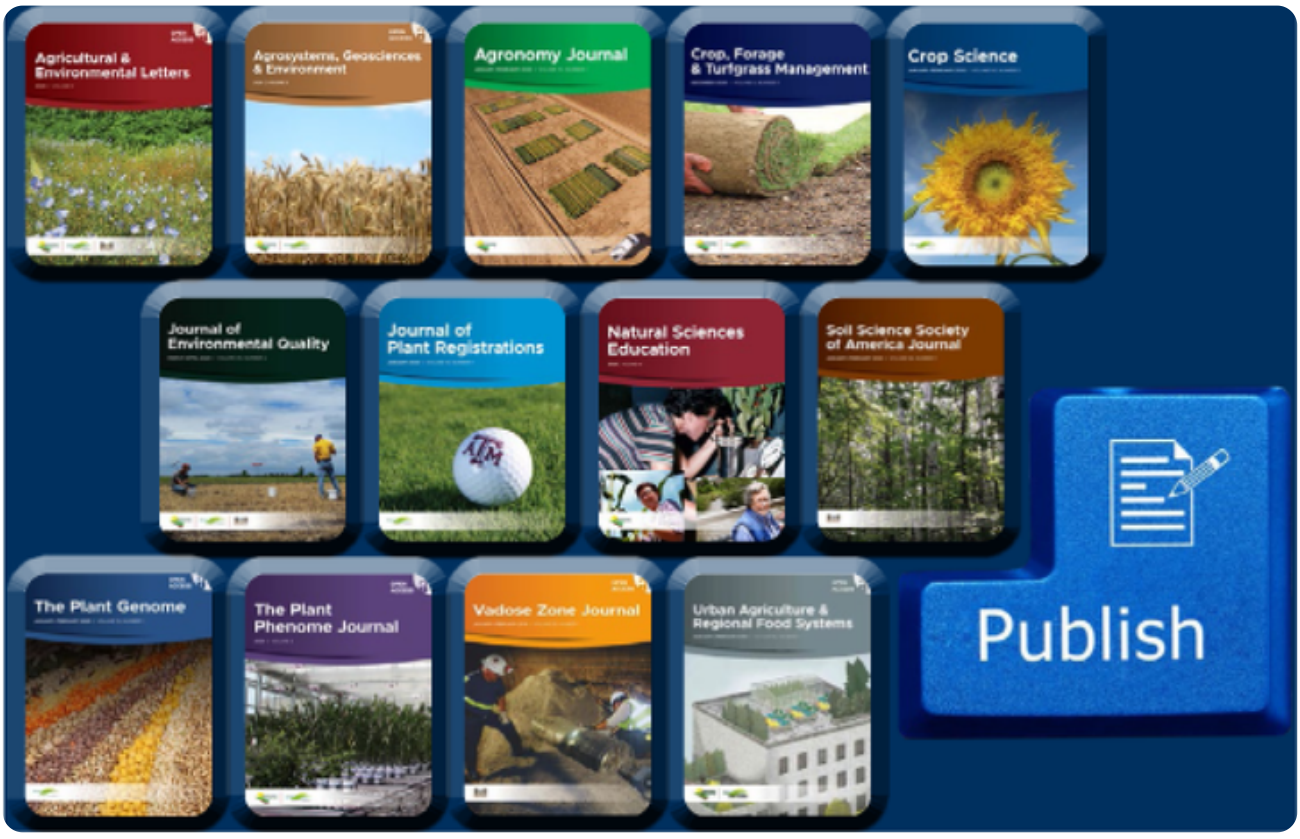
Science Societies

# Office of Science and Technology Policy considering major open science policy change

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Late last year, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Trump Administration came close to issuing an executive order on open science to accelerate broad public access to peer-reviewed scholarly journals. OSTP held off on finalizing new open science policies after hearing from more than 70 scientific societies (**https://bit.ly/2yOvXGL**), encouraging the Administration to collaboratively engage with stakeholders. Recently, OSTP issued a request for information ( **https://bit.ly/2x6WRt1**) to collect additional input.

This input will play an important role in whether the Administration proceeds with an executive order reducing the current 12-month embargo for publications. OSTP appears keen to move forward and is seriously contemplating adopting a zero-month embargo for publications. The COVID-19 crisis is also increasing calls for free immediate access to research results.

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are working to advance open science and have supported the movement to full open access for many years. Of our 13 journals, six are gold open access. The remaining seven are hybrids with an open access option. To increase discoverability and availability of our publications, we launched a partnership with Wiley Publishing, a leader in the development of transformational open access agreements worldwide.

## Worthy Goal with Unintended Consequences

We support developing a publications model that maintains quality, fosters creativity, and encourages transparent open science. However, is moving to immediate free access the best way to achieve these goals? Or, is it an existential threat to the mission of scientific societies like ours who play a vital role in the dissemination of knowledge?

Open science is the right goal, but the unintended consequences could undermine the very ability of scientific societies to foster, promote, and support the research community they serve.

In 2013, OSTP directed federal agencies to make federally funded research results published in peer-reviewed journals publicly available. In doing so, they created a 12-month post-publication embargo period. By keeping the subscription model intact, federal agencies enabled nonprofit publishers to recover the investments made in curating and assuring quality research content.

As a nonprofit publisher, we provide valuable services, including the coordination of peer review, that are essential to maintaining high quality, internationally respected scientific journals. The current 12-month embargo provides the financial stability to meet these objectives.

Since making the results of federally funded research available for free immediately is a de facto gold open access mandate, it shifts the costs from institutional subscribers to authors. Our journals are primarily supported by institutional subscribers. Not only are our journals self sustaining, but they are one of the main ways we fund activities to support and promote our research community.

## Consideration of Services Provided beyond Publishing

This is an often-overlooked impact on researchers. The cost to publish will be almost entirely shouldered by author licensing fees. In many cases, these fees will be significantly increased to offset subscription revenue. It could also lead to a reduction in other member services.

A pay-to-publish model is unlikely to be accompanied by increased funding for author fees. A reliance on existing grant funds would result in a significant diversion of money

away from research while still leaving many researchers without funds to publish.

Scientific society journals play an integral role in advancing knowledge and enabling our disciplines to serve a vibrant American research enterprise. Nonprofit societies are at the forefront of disseminating impactful research and transforming results into action. At the same time, these member society publishers provide services beyond research publishing to develop the next generation of scientists through support of their communities with educational programs, certifications, public communication, and policy engagement. These services will be reduced without a sustainable publishing business model.

Rather than upsetting the current proven and successful model for reporting, curating, and archiving scientific results, we encourage OSTP to partner with publishers to achieve our shared open science goals.

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