January 19, 2016

Senator Mike Padden
Chair
Senate Law & Justice Committee
106 Irv Newhouse Building
P.O. Box 40404
Olympia, WA 98504

Senator Jamie Pedersen
Senate Law & Justice Committee
235 John A. Cherberg Building
P.O. Box 40443
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Support for S.B. 6361

Dear Chair Padden and Senator Pedersen:

We write on behalf of the Law Librarians of Puget Sound (LLOPS), the Washington State Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), to express our support of S.B. 6361, which would enact the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA). We represent law librarians from law firms, law schools, county law libraries and other institutions throughout Washington. In addition, we join with the Western Pacific Chapter (WestPac) of AALL, which has supported UELMA in the states that make up its Chapter, including Washington.

LLOPS supports S.B. 6361 because it will ensure that anyone--whether a judge, legislator, lawyer, or member of the public--will be able to verify the trustworthiness of Washington's primary legal materials available to them online. This bill will ensure that Washington's online legal materials are guaranteed the same level of authority traditionally provided by print publications. Importantly, S.B. 6361 covers key primary legal materials including the Washington Constitution, the Revised Code of Washington, the Washington Administrative Code, and the Washington State Register.

S.B. 6361 addresses the urgent problem, identified in AALL's 2007 State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources, that more and more states are putting their legal
resources online, without assuring trustworthiness and reliability. As you know, Washington does not currently authenticate its electronic legal materials.

UELMA is supported by the Uniform Law Commission (ULC), AALL, and the American Bar Association. Many other stakeholders—including the U.S. Government Publishing Office, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Society of American Archivists, the National Center for State Courts, and the Association of Reporters of Judicial Decisions—were observers to the ULC drafting committee.

As Washington law librarians, we support S.B. 6361 and have passed a Chapter Resolution confirming this support (copy attached). By enacting this bill, Washington will establish itself as a leader among states that have recognized that official, electronic legal materials must be authenticated, preserved, and made permanently available to the public. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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