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August 31, 2023

Mr. Crosby Kemper
Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services
955 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.
Suite 4000
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Director Kemper:

I am writing regarding the nomination of the Copper Queen Library (CQL) for the 2024 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The CQL was established in 1882, as the first public library in Arizona and has witnessed significant events in Bisbee's history, including Arizona statehood in 1912, two World Wars, two pandemics, the infamous Bisbee Deportation, and the closing of the copper mines in 1976. It's mission is to **Build** community, **Inspire** curiosity, **Share** ideas, **Bridge** gaps, **Embrace** knowledge, and **Enrich** Lives (BISBEE). The library staff work to develop innovative ways to provide access to learning opportunities for visitors of all ages.

Bisbee, Arizona is located in the Mule Mountains of southeast Arizona, 8 miles from the Mexico/USA border. It is a low-income, rural community with a population size of 5,000. Additionally, more than 80% of students in the Bisbee Unified School District qualify for free or reduced lunches, and many come from homes where English is not the first language. The Copper Queen Library serves as a community center for the Bisbee community by providing programs, resources and collaborative partnerships with community organizations to support the Bisbee community. For example, CQL implemented *Community Conversations* programs that allow visitors to talk to each other to enhance literacy, community and mental and physical health, and sustainability and access to technology.

The Copper Queen Library is committed to serving the southeast Arizona community by creating innovative programs to support visitors. In 2018 Copper Queen Library expanded its services by opening the CQL Annex that has allowed opportunities for surrounding communities in the San Jose Neighborhood of Bisbee, which includes unincorporated areas of Cochise County. This region borders Naco, Arizona, which is a border town that has a student population who crosses through it's Port of Entry along the United States – Mexico border each day to attend Naco Elementary, a K-8 school that feeds into Bisbee High School. They have developed programming that includes Internet Hotspot Lending Program; a Seed Library and Garden Club which promotes sustainability; a Tool Library to check out carpentry, automotive, and garden tools; and a Recreation Library which offers Pickle ball and Bocce Ball sets to use in local Bisbee parks. These efforts were developed in response to barriers that were identified by library staff.

I appreciate your careful consideration of the Copper Queen Library nomination for the 2024 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. This library is unique and distinct in many regards and ask that you provide full and fair consideration for their nomination under all applicable rules and regulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress