



September 12, 2018

Fritz Foy
President and Publisher
Tor Books
175 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. Foy

We are writing this letter on behalf of the Oregon Library Association (OLA) and the Oregon Digital Library Consortium (ODLC) regarding your four-month embargo on sales of new Tor eBooks to libraries. Our organizations serve the library needs of more than 4 million residents of Oregon. In the case of OLA, this means providing advocacy and training – including promoting eBooks – for over 1,000 members of the library profession in school, public, academic, and special libraries throughout Oregon. The ODLC serves as the eBooks purchaser for more than 31 public and tribal libraries and consortiums of all sizes, and spends more than \$350,000 on digital content each year.

Like so many other library organizations, librarians, and library patrons across North America, we are writing in opposition to your decision to embargo new titles from the library market for four months. In addition to disadvantaging the many library patrons who depend on libraries for access to books and authors, this embargo will reduce Tor's presence in the reading lives of the 172 million patrons of America's public libraries. But, beyond the cost to these patrons, your decision will also mean a sharp decline in your share of the \$341,473,315 public libraries spent on eBooks in 2016 alone. In Oregon, you will lose out on some of the \$6 million spent by the libraries our organizations represent.¹

However, this embargo is not just about the disservice you are doing to libraries and library users, or even the reduction in Tor's share of our purchasing budgets. This is a decision that will damage sales of the many popular authors you publish. The damage is already happening, now that the embargo is in place, and will persist for some time even if the embargo is lifted.

¹ Number of registered library patrons and eBooks collection expenditures retrieved from Institute of Museum and Library Services FY 2016 Public Library Survey data online at <https://www.ims.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey/explore-pls-data/pls-data>

There are few people more passionate about books than librarians and the readers we serve. The research suggests that your embargo will stop a major source of marketing and promotion for each book you release while the embargo remains in effect, and that this will also impact those authors published during the embargo going forward. A 2012 Pew Research Center study revealed that 25% of all eBook readers get recommendations from a library or library website. This same study revealed that library users are just as likely as non-users to have purchased their last book rather than borrow that book from the library. In other words, libraries do not reduce book sales, but do guide what readers purchase. Respondents to the survey described the library as a gateway that helped them discover new authors and books they would then purchase. Indeed, this research suggests that Tor will see fewer books recommended to the readers you most hope to reach.²

Frequent Tor author Brandon Sanderson described it best in his children's book Alcatraz Versus the Evil Librarians:

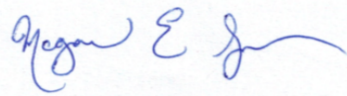
...I'd like to take this opportunity to commend you for reading this book. I realize the difficulty you must have gone through to obtain it – after all, no Librarian is likely to recommend it...

Without libraries and librarians, you will find fewer readers for Tor books. By choosing to make it more difficult for readers to find what you publish, you are also losing out on current and future sales, enthusiastic promotion, and many millions of eager readers.

We hope that you will reconsider your decision and restart a conversation with some of your most valuable partners.

Sincerely,


Esther Moberg
President, Oregon Library Association


Meg Spencer
Chair, Oregon Digital Library Consortium

² <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2012/06/22/part-2-where-people-discover-and-get-their-books>