



## Customer Proposes “Do-Not-Deliver” Option

For years, the ratepaying clients of commercial mail producers have had to fend off legislative measures to enable addressees to opt-out of having mail sent to them. Though “do-not-mail” requests are already feasible through non-postal “mail preference services,” proponents of legislative measures note the delay in getting names removed from mailing lists and the failure of third-party list owners to ensure their lists reflect consumer requests.

### Do-not-deliver

A proposal received by the Postal Regulatory Commission on April 28 took a different approach.

Docketed as PI2025-3, the *Proposal for Consumer-Driven Bulk Mail Opt-Out via Informed Delivery with Revenue Offset* was submitted by Jammin Jablanski, a private individual with no apparent connection to mail other than being a postal customer.

### The proposal stated:

“This proposal addresses the widespread consumer dissatisfaction with unwanted bulk mail while recognizing USPS’s reliance on bulk-rate revenue. It recommends an ‘Opt-Out with Offset’ program integrated into USPS’s existing Informed Delivery system, allowing consumers to pay a small per-piece fee (e.g., \$0.10) to decline delivery of selected bulk-rate mail items. This approach balances consumer choice, USPS revenue stability, and environmental benefits.

“Background and Justification: Bulk mail constitutes approximately 40% of USPS revenue, yet surveys consistently show significant consumer frustration with unsolicited mail. The environmental cost of producing, transporting, and disposing of unwanted mail is substantial. USPS’s Informed Delivery platform already provides digital previews of incoming mail, making it an ideal system to enable user-controlled delivery preferences without significant operational overhead.

### “Proposed Model:

- Eligibility: Any consumer enrolled in Informed Delivery.
- Mechanism: Consumers view scanned images of incoming mail via Informed Delivery.
- Eligible bulk-rate items are flagged with an option: ‘Do Not Deliver This Item.’
- Opt-out selection triggers a suppression fee (e.g., \$0.10 per item) billed to the user’s account.
- Bulk mailers are informed of opt-out metrics but not individual consumer identities.

### “Anticipated Benefits:

- Improved consumer satisfaction and trust.
- Reduced environmental waste from unwanted mail.
- Maintained or increased USPS revenue through opt-out fees.
- Aligned USPS services with modern consumer expectations.
- Option for bulk mailers to receive opt-out analytics, enhancing transparency.

### “Addressing Potential Concerns:

- Revenue Loss: Offset through consumer opt-out fees.
- Bulk Mailer Resistance: The model respects bulk mailers’ rights to send mail; only recipient choice is exercised.
- Operational Complexity: Minimal, leveraging USPS’s current Informed Delivery infrastructure.

“Call to Action: I invite the Postal Regulatory Commission to consider a feasibility study or pilot program for this opt-out approach. The program could enhance consumer satisfaction, reduce waste, and provide a sustainable model that preserves USPS revenue.”

### Referral

On May 15, the PRC referred the proposal to the Postal Service for its consideration, stating in part:

“The Commission appreciates Mr. Jablanski’s interest in improving the postal system. However, the Postal Service is better suited to consider the Proposal directly and evaluate the financial and operational feasibility of implementing the opt-out feature for several reasons.

“First, Mr. Jablanski asserts that the Postal Service could implement the Proposal ‘without significant operational overhead’ by leveraging the existing Informed Delivery platform. This may not be true if the Informed Delivery platform is unable to flag eligible bulk-rate mailpieces with an opt-out option. The Postal Service may have to create a new platform, which could increase costs. Also, how the Postal Service would stop delivery of flagged mailpieces is unclear, and it may incur additional expenses in doing so.

“Second, Mr. Jablanski asserts that the opt-out fees would offset any revenue loss. The Postal Service is in a better position to evaluate potential revenue loss because of its relationship with both bulk mailers and customers.

“Third, it is unclear what ‘opt-out’ metrics the Postal Service would provide to bulk mailers and how it would do so without revealing customer identities.

“The Commission refers this Proposal to the Postal Service for it to consider. ...”

### Observations

As the PRC detected, the proposal wouldn’t be as simple to implement as it sounds, and may result in additional costs, especially if the carrier needs somehow to get involved at the time of delivery.

Looking at the proposal more broadly, the proposal has merit to Mr. Jablanski because it reflects the perspective of an addressee tired of receiving unwanted direct mail. To his credit, he’s trying to find a solution.

However, the perspective of the sender of that mail is very different – they’re paying a mailer to have it produced and the USPS to have it delivered. For the Postal Service to adopt a process that, for a fee, would thwart the purposes of the ratepaying sender would seem a conflict of interest at least, and likely contrary to statute and the agency’s mission. Simply put, the sender pays to mail to the addressee, and nothing less than delivery to that person is expected.

On a higher level is the conceptual value of direct mail – its effectiveness and value for the sender’s money. Establishing a process that lets mail *not be delivered* undermines the value of mail to the sender and encourages diversion of the sender’s messages to other media – hardly in the interests of the Postal Service even if it would be collecting a fee.

Nonetheless, the proposal does reflect a legitimate problem: the failure of marketers and list owners to manage their databases and address lists. Aside from spotty compliance with address correction and related postal requirements, the parties are failing to recognize what’s represented by some recipients’ unwavering nonresponse to repeated solicitations.

While it may be true that repeated messages are required to make a sale or gain a donation, there’s a point where the sender needs to yield, and weed out chronic non-respondents. Not doing so inspires frustrated mail recipients like Mr. Jablanski to develop proposals that – if ever implemented – would hurt *all* mailers as well as the Postal Service.