



Junk Mail

Societal and Environmental Crazyiness

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Prologue

This report, along with its phased recommendations, aims to tackle the prevalent and often overlooked issue of Junk Mail proliferation, highlighting both its environmental impact and societal contradictions, while offering solutions to slow down, and ultimately, abolish this outdated and hugely inefficient form of communication.

While it does not claim to resolve every aspect of this complex problem, it seeks to serve as a catalyst—an initial step and rallying point to confront the widespread waste associated with Bulk Mail, commonly known as Junk Mail. Our strategy hinges on amplifying awareness, creating enough noise to capture the attention and provoke action from elected officials and bureaucratic agencies.

The intended audience for this report is broad, encompassing individuals, digital influencers, non-profits, community organizations like Rotary and Sierra Club chapters, environmental proponent groups, government representatives at all levels, school-based fundraising groups, and anyone with an interest in stopping this madness. Our goal is to foster widespread awareness and build a committed coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to environmental conservation and sustainability, built from an elimination of Junk mail principles, impacting everyone whom receives mail.

We will leverage existing not for profit organizations sharing similar goals. And look to social media channels to get the message out including X, Instagram, Facebook, and You Tube while seeking out influencers whom share our common goal.

For individuals, we encourage you to share this report widely within your networks and beyond.

Please give special attention to the Call-to-Action flyer presented in the Appendix.

Additionally, we invite you to periodically visit our website, www.junkmailwaste.com, as we come on line in the next weeks and continue to update and expand our efforts.

Junk Mail:

Environmental and Societal Crazyiness

1. Introduction - Are we crazy?

Have you ever asked yourself the following questions and wondered, are you the only one that notices?

- Does receiving junk mail delivered to your mailbox every day of your life seem wasteful?
- Have you been programmed to the task of taking junk mail directly from your mailbox to the trash or recycle bin?
- Does it seem silly that, in a digital and environmentally aware age, we still employ outdated, inefficient, and environmentally irresponsible methods of communication?

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, you're not alone. The practice of producing and delivering junk mail (bulk mail) is a colossal waste of resources. Trees, vital for converting and storing carbon dioxide, are sacrificed to produce paper that mostly ends up discarded without a second glance. The process consumes significant energy and fuel for production and transportation, only to result in a one-way trip to the landfill or recycling bin.



What's worse, society has been conditioned to accept this wasteful routine. The daily act of sorting through junk mail and discarding it has become so ingrained in our lives that we hardly question its absurdity. This mindless cycle wastes time, reinforces inefficiency, and contributes to environmental harm.

In today's digital age, where instant and sustainable communication options exist, the continuation of paper junk mail is both outdated and negligent. As we face increasing environmental challenges and strive for greater awareness, it's imperative to question and change

practices that no longer serve us or the planet. The time to replace junk mail with modern, eco-friendly alternatives is long overdue...

Or will we continue the craziness of the times?

2. What is Bulk Mail?

Bulk mail, commonly referred to as junk mail, reflects a troubling societal norm: the widespread acceptance of unnecessary waste. It is estimated that over 77 billion pieces of bulk mail are delivered annually in the United States alone. It includes marketing solicitations for local products and services, as well as appeals for support and donations from charities and political campaigns. These solicitations are often designed to reach as many recipients as possible, regardless of their relevance.

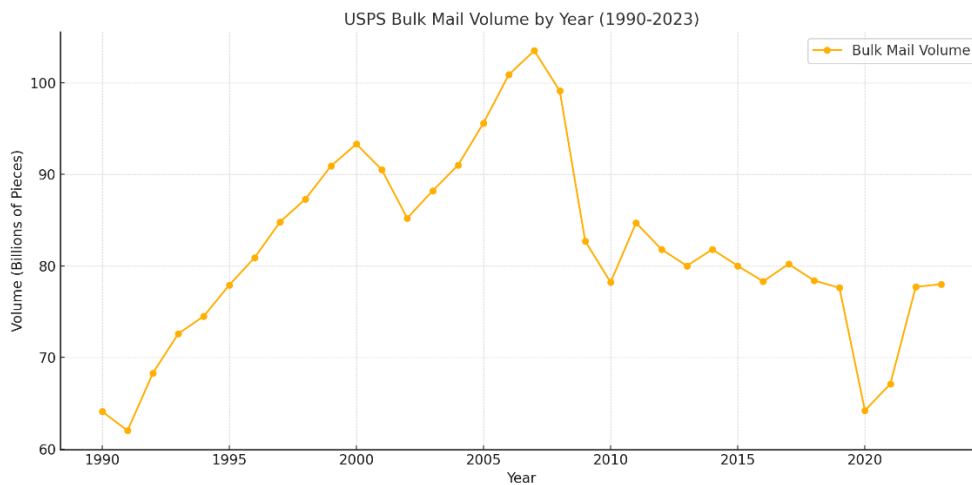
The USPS delivers bulk mail at significantly reduced rates compared to standard first-class mail. Here is a basic summary of pricing (valid as of the most recent USPS updates in 2024):

- **First-Class Mail:** \$0.73 per piece
- **Marketing Mail:** \$0.20 per piece
- **Nonprofit Bulk Mail:** as low as \$0.10 per piece

This pricing practice distorts market realities, encouraging decisions by bulk mail users that perpetuate this outdated direct marketing methodology and overlook the significant environmental and societal costs of paper-based distribution.

Each day, households retrieve their mail to find that the majority of it consists of unsolicited and non-valuable items, cluttering their mailboxes and overshadowing the few truly important pieces. While many people dispose of junk mail in the trash or a recycling bin, these efforts often fail to mitigate its environmental impact. A significant portion ends up in landfills or fails to be effectively recycled due to contamination issues.

- **Crazy Fact:** Incredibly, Political bulk (non-profit) mail is subsidized at the lowest mail rate offered among all USPS bulk mail categories.
- **Concerning trend:** In spite of our environmental awareness, bulk mail usage has been increasing over the last 4 years to nearly 77-78 billion pieces estimated in 2023 after falling twice in recent times resulting from Covid and the 2008 recession.



Bulk mail significantly damages our environment, and as a society, we inadvertently encourage and subsidize this harm through USPS policies—a practice that urgently needs to be reconsidered.

3. Environmental Impact of Bulk Mail

The environmental cost of bulk mail is staggering. Every year, over 100 million trees are cut down in the United States alone to produce junk mail. This deforestation eliminates critical carbon sequestration capacity, significantly contributing to CO2 emissions across the lifecycle of bulk mail production, transportation, and disposal. These processes generate approximately 11.4 million metric tons of CO2 emissions annually, emphasizing the urgency for systemic change.

The lifecycle of bulk mail involves several key stages, each with significant environmental consequences:

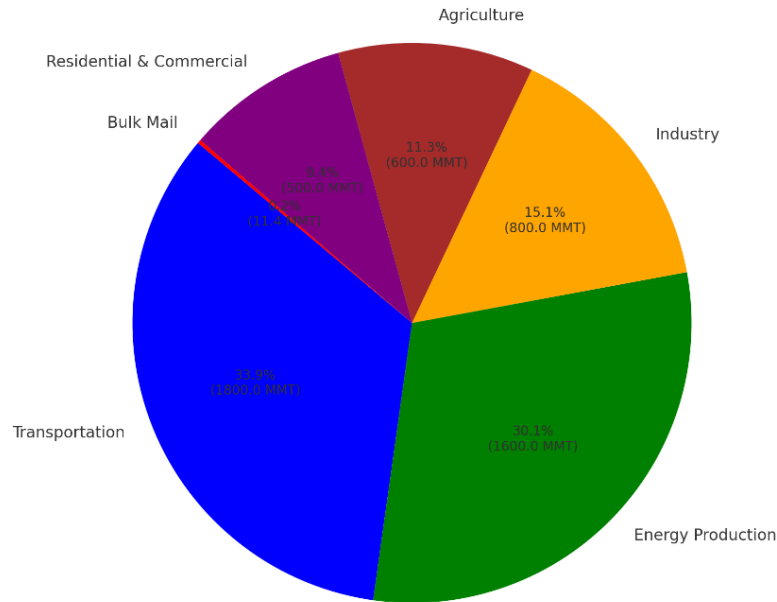
1. **Paper Production:** The production of paper for junk mail requires the felling of over 100 million trees annually, resulting in approximately 5.8 million metric tons of CO2 emissions. Beyond this, paper manufacturing is highly energy-intensive, consuming significant amounts of fossil fuels and water. This figure does not account for the benefits of carbon sequestration these trees would have provided through photosynthesis, which plays a critical role in reducing atmospheric CO2 levels.



2. **Printing:** The energy-intensive printing process adds approximately 2 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions to the total. Additionally, the use of chemical-based inks and dyes creates waste that is difficult to manage sustainably.
3. **Transportation:** Bulk mail, including its production and delivery components such as raw materials like wood pulp, is transported across the country through multiple stages. This process contributes approximately 400,000 metric tons of CO₂ emissions annually, driven largely by fossil fuel consumption. The "last mile" delivery to households is especially resource-intensive due to the individualized nature of the logistics, further compounding the environmental impact.
4. **Waste Management:** Nearly half of all junk mail is discarded without being opened, with much of it ending up in landfills. This contributes approximately 3.2 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions annually, primarily due to the methane released during decomposition. Methane is approximately 25 times more potent than CO₂ over a 100-year period. Enhanced recycling systems could mitigate this impact, but inefficiencies and contamination often prevent effective recycling.



Major Sources of CO2 Emissions in the US (Percentage and Metric Tons)



Data source: Estimated emissions data, 2023

To provide further perspective, these 11.4 million metric tons of CO2 emissions are equivalent to the annual energy consumption of over 1.3 million homes or the emissions of approximately 2.48 million passenger cars. It is important to note that these estimates may be conservative, particularly in accounting for transportation-related emissions, which can vary greatly based on logistics and last-mile delivery demands.

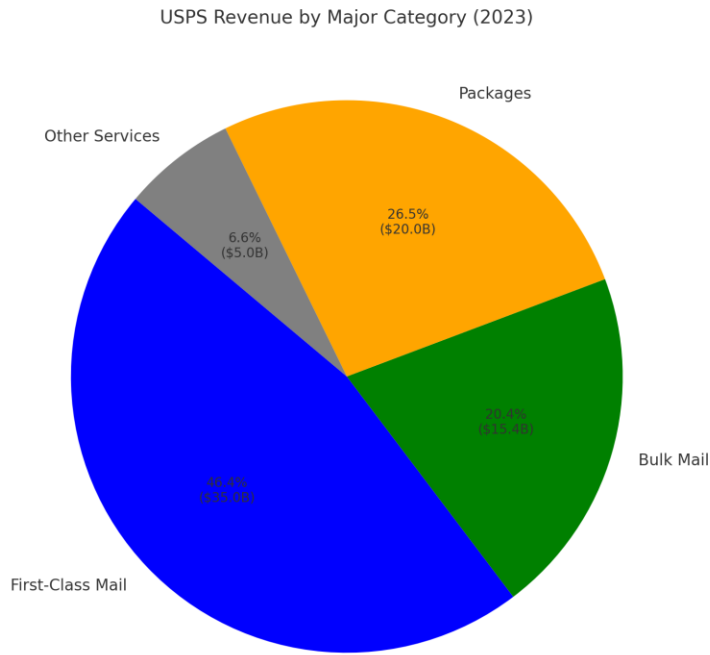
4. How Did We Get Here?

The mandate to create a United States Postal Service (USPS) was established by the United States Constitution and morphed into its current status through legislation with the mission of connecting citizens across the country through reliable communication guaranteed six days a week. Initially, this purpose was achieved through the delivery of letters, fostering connectivity and societal growth. Over time, as communication means and methods shifted, the USPS adapted its strategies to remain financially viable, heavily relying on bulk mail as a revenue source. This evolution has sparked ongoing debates about the sustainability and practicality of these practices.

However, the USPS has faced significant financial challenges. According to its most recent financial results, the USPS reported a loss of \$4.9 billion in 2023. Despite efforts to increase efficiency and find alternative revenue streams, the agency remains reliant on federal subsidies, which amount to approximately \$4 billion annually. These subsidies are intended to support universal service obligations but have drawn criticism for indirectly enabling environmentally harmful practices, such as subsidized bulk mail rates. This reliance underscores the tension between the USPS's financial viability and the broader societal costs of its operational model.

To counter declining revenue, the USPS introduced bulk mail policies designed to incentivize large-scale mailings by offering significantly reduced postage rates. For example, nonprofit bulk rates can be as low as \$0.10 per piece compared to \$0.73 for standard first-class mail. The intent

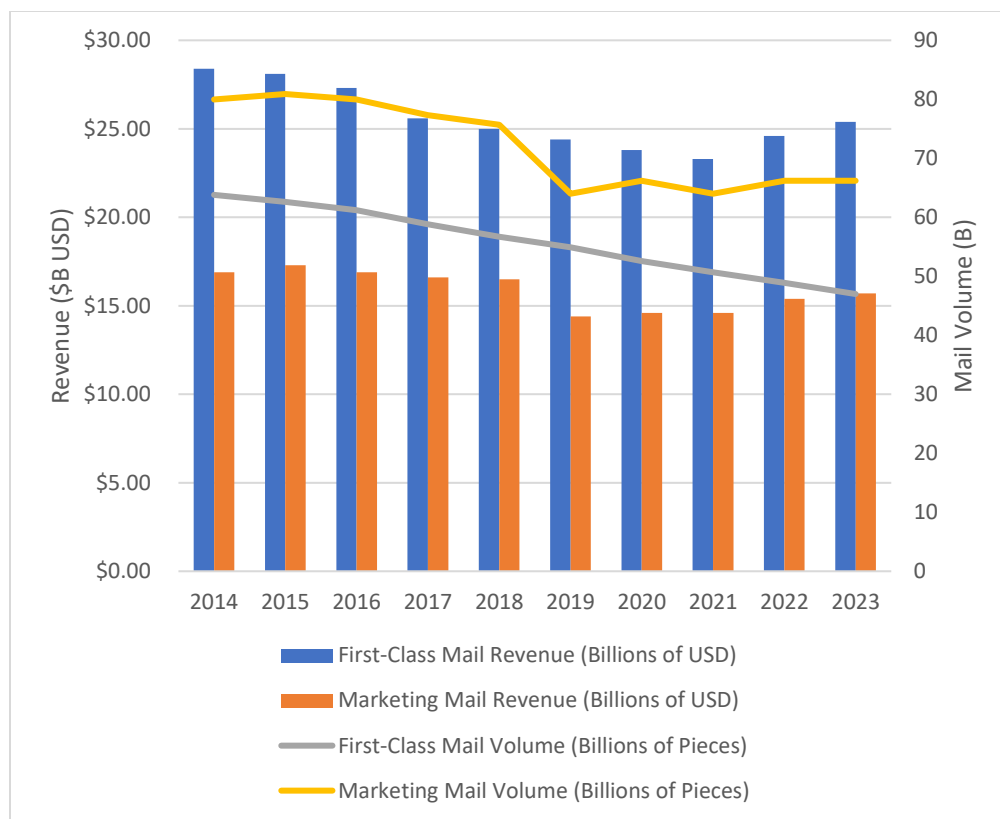
was to generate incremental revenue without significantly increasing costs, thereby improving USPS financial performance. However, this approach has proven insufficient. Bulk mail rates often fail to cover the actual costs of delivery, leading to an indirect subsidy for bulk mail users. Meanwhile, the federal government continues to subsidize the USPS itself, further complicating the financial picture. This pricing disparity has contributed to the proliferation of junk mail, amplifying its environmental and societal impact.



Data source: USPS Annual Reports, 2023

To illustrate the problem stemming from the imbalance of postal rates between first-class and bulk mail, and to highlight the ongoing subsidy: if all mail—both bulk and first-class—were charged the same postage rate, the price would be 40 cents per piece. To address the USPS’s annual deficit, this unified rate would need to rise to 44 cents per piece. For comparison, the current charge for first-class mail stands at 70 cents.

As illustrated by the following chart, historically, the USPS has been doing the opposite of what is needed to improve financial results. As first-class mail volume fell, first-class mail pricing was increased, leading to the lowering of their higher margin first-class mail demand. Then USPS promoted low margin bulk mail to make up the difference. A vicious cycle of driving first-class mail demand down via pricing, then increasing pricing to make up the margin loss...all the while creating paper waste and increased CO2 emissions.



5. Proponents of Bulk Mail

Proponents of bulk mail often argue that it serves as a critical tool for businesses, nonprofits, and political campaigns to communicate directly with large audiences. It provides an affordable means for these entities to promote their messages, products, or services, particularly in areas where digital access may be limited.

Key arguments in favor of bulk mail include:

- **Economic Benefits - Jobs:** Bulk mail supports jobs in industries such as printing, paper production, transportation, and waste management.
- **Economic Benefits - Small Businesses:** Bulk mail offers a cost-effective avenue for direct marketing, allowing small businesses to reach potential customers efficiently. This affordability is crucial for many small enterprises that might otherwise struggle to compete or sustain operations.
- **Revenue for USPS:** Bulk mail is a critical revenue source for the USPS, helping to offset operational deficits and sustain universal mail services, which are essential for ensuring connectivity across the nation.
- **Access and Equity:** Bulk mail ensures that messages reach rural and underserved populations who may not have reliable internet access, maintaining inclusivity in communication.
- **Marketing Effectiveness:** Direct mail often achieves higher response rates compared to digital marketing campaigns. However, both methods depend on a model where the

response rate is very small relative to the significant volume of marketing output. Despite this, direct mail remains attractive to businesses and organizations due to its ability to deliver tangible results, even though the ratio of mail output to response remains disproportionately low (<3%). This inefficiency only makes sense to the viability calculation when coupled with such artificially low direct marketing costs resulting from lower than sustainable bulk mail pricing.

Despite these perceived benefits, the environmental and societal costs of bulk mail continue to provoke debate about its overall value.

6. Alternatives to Bulk Mail

Modern technology offers numerous alternatives to bulk mail, including:

1. **Email Marketing:** Cost-effective, highly customizable, and environmentally friendly, email marketing enables businesses to reach targeted audiences instantly without generating physical waste. Advanced analytics further allow for measuring campaign success in real-time.
2. **Social Media Advertising:** Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn provide precise ad targeting based on demographics, interests, and behavior, ensuring that messages reach the intended audience while eliminating unnecessary material waste.
3. **SMS and Mobile Notifications:** Instant communication via text messages or app notifications is not only paper-free but also highly effective in engaging users, particularly for time-sensitive updates or promotions.
4. **Digital Catalogs:** By hosting catalogs online, companies can offer the same comprehensive product information with interactive features such as search, filters, and multimedia content—all without the environmental cost of printing and shipping physical copies.
5. **Web-Based Communication:** Many organizations now opt for customer portals and subscription-based newsletters, reducing dependency on direct mail while fostering continuous, eco-friendly engagement.

These modern alternatives not only reduce environmental impact but also offer superior tracking, targeting, and cost-efficiency compared to traditional bulk mail. By embracing these tools, businesses and organizations can transition to a more sustainable communication model that aligns with contemporary consumer preferences and environmental priorities.

7. Current Solutions

Efforts to mitigate the impact of junk mail include:

- 1) **Opt-Out Services:** Tools like the National Do Not Mail List allow consumers to reduce unwanted mail by requesting removal from mass mailing lists.
 - a) DMAchoice.org managed by the Direct Marketing Association lets you remove your name from many direct mail marketing lists for a fee of \$6 for a ten-year subscription.
 - b) Other services such as OptOutPrescreen.com are free and will stop pre-approved credit card and insurance offers.
 - c) CatalogChoice.org works similarly but for certain catalogues,

- 2) **PaperKarma.org:** Allows you to take a picture of junk mail and automatically request removal from mailing lists. The one downside is that the service is not free service, but truthfully it is well worth the \$25 annual subscription price.
- 3) **Direct Contact:** Individuals can contact companies directly to request their removal from mailing databases. While effective on a small scale, this approach can be time-consuming for consumers.
 - a) Valpak and RedPlum by RetailMeNot use opt out forms for removal.
- 4) **Recycling Initiatives:** Enhanced recycling programs aim to minimize the landfill impact of junk mail by encouraging proper recycling practices and improving the infrastructure for managing paper waste.
- 5) **Digital Transition Campaigns:** Encouraging businesses to shift their communication methods to digital platforms reduces reliance on physical mailings and helps cut down the production of unnecessary junk mail.
- 6) **USPS Informed Delivery:** Allows you to monitor but not stop bulk mail giving users better ability to manage bulk mail. The future for USPS informed delivery will hopefully include the ability to opt out directly on the site each day.
- 7) **Notes**
 - a) Adding notes to your Mail Box stating NO JUNK MAIL has been effective in some jurisdictions but only works for unaddressed bulk mail.
 - b) Marking mail as RETURN TO SENDER has been effective in some cases however, this adds environmental waste to the overall problem.
- 8) **Bills and statements**
 - a) While technically not junk mail, credit card bills, utility bills, cable, phone, internet bill can have a cumulative effect on the mail volume you receive. This of course is in addition to the paper waste created when sending a paper bill in the mail.
 - b) opt in to all of your paperless bills and statements now.

But none of these methods get to the root of the problem. They require significant effort from individuals and depend on widespread participation to be effective, which remains unlikely. The systemic nature of junk mail production demands broader policy changes and industry reform to achieve meaningful and sustainable solutions.

8. What Is the Solution?

Long-term, the elimination of bulk mail is essential. Continuing to rely on outdated and wasteful practices is incompatible with the pressing environmental challenges we face and basic common sense. The contradiction between processing vast quantities of unwanted paper mail while at the same time advocating for sustainability highlights a systemic hypocrisy that must be addressed. Every day, millions of individuals move junk mail from their mailbox to the recycling bin without reflecting on its cumulative impact. This cycle not only wastes resources but also undermines authentic commitments to environmental responsibility.

Transitioning from a constitutionally based, outdated “paper and carbon based” system to a digital world presents significant challenges. Resistance is inevitable, particularly as legacy jobs face gradual elimination. Critics will contend that eliminating bulk mail has a proportionally limited impact compared to larger environmental issues such as CO2 emissions resulting from transportation or energy production which together represent more than 60% of all CO2 emissions. Furthermore, the USPS's constitutionally mandated role adds complexity to

implementing structural reforms. Acknowledging these challenges, a phased approach can help to facilitate a smooth transition, minimize resistance, and maintain operational continuity.

While eliminating bulk mail may not fully resolve our global environmental challenges, it stands as a visible and practical measure that underscores broader sustainability goals. A multi-phased approach over three to five years is anticipated to achieve the outlined objectives most effectively, with Phase 1 generating sufficient public outcry and resistance to capture the attention of key decision makers.

The core strategy is to mount widespread opposition to bulk mail by undermining its effectiveness and forcing a recalibration of the cost–benefit analysis employed by bulk mail generators. Simultaneously, it is important to highlight the inherent hypocrisy of continuing to produce large volumes of paper mail at all. This will heighten political awareness and catalyze genuine efforts to transform the USPS from a traditional paper mail service into a modern information and communication provider that reflects current trends.

Phase 1 consists of two separate but similar awareness pathways. Phase 1A is the human grass roots pathway and Phase 1B is a digital and collaboration pathway with many overlaps between Phase 1A and 1B.

Phase 1A – Human Grassroots Call to Action - (SAS: Stop – Alert – Share)

SAS is a grassroots effort designed to:

- **STOP** unnecessary bulk mail within your personal control.
- **ALERT** elected officials and bureaucrats about the severity of the issue.
- **SHARE** this call to action with personal networks.

Phase 1A prioritizes creating awareness at multiple levels, significantly influencing bulk mail producers. This important initial phase emphasizes building political will and engaging politicians and bureaucrats in meaningful dialogue to support structural change within the USPS. SAS empowers individuals to take immediate action by visibly reducing the viability of bulk mail as we direct our efforts to reduce its economic effectiveness as a viable marketing tool. By doing our small part, together, we can impact bulk mail producers while gaining needed visibility to the issue from our elected officials and bureaucrats,

(Refer to the **CALL-TO-ACTION flyer** in the Appendix to initiate involvement)

In Parallel to Phase 1A will be Phase 1B a Digital Call to Action.

Phase 1B - Digital Call to Action - Social Media Mobilization, Influencer Engagement and Collaboration

To create a broad cultural shift around the environmental destruction caused by junk mail, modern Digital strategies are necessary to both enhance the effectiveness of Phase 1A, by building a strong foundational message, activating digital influence, and forging strategic partnerships. Each component is designed to expand reach, spark public dialogue, and drive real-world action.

Our goal with Phase 1B will be to frame junk mail as an environmental issue, not just a personal inconvenience. Most people see junk mail as annoying—but few understand the scale of the damage it causes to forests, landfills, water use, and carbon output.

We will create data-driven campaign materials that include:

- Shocking visual stats (e.g., “Over 100 million trees are cut down annually for junk mail in the U.S. alone.”)
- Real-life stories of mail overload, waste, and unnecessary carbon footprint
- Educational content explaining how opting out can reduce paper waste and emissions

The key is to make junk mail **visible**—and clearly connected to climate impact.

With a strong narrative in place, we’ll take the message to the platforms and partners where modern conversations and influence happens:

Social Media Mobilization

- **X (formerly Twitter):** Punchy facts, viral threads, and direct engagement with policy and environmental voices.
- **Instagram:** Shareable infographics, reels showing waste-to-landfill journeys, and swipeable opt-out tips.
- **YouTube:** Short-form explainers, animated stats, and personal stories of opting out and cleaning up.
- **Facebook:** Community-based messaging, local event promotion, and group sharing with eco-focused audiences.

Influencer Outreach

Enlist eco-conscious creators, sustainability bloggers, and even minimalist lifestyle influencers to help amplify the message. Focus areas include:

- Climate advocates
- Zero-waste lifestyle leaders
- Digital decluttering experts
- Tech-forward environmentalists

Each will receive a content kit with:

- Scripted language
- Stats and talking points
- Co-branded visuals
- Action steps (e.g., download PaperKarma, sign opt-out petitions)

The goal is to create a **wave of visibility**—turning anti-junk mail into a smart, modern, and moral stance.

Strategic Partnerships & Collaboration

To scale quickly and maximize credibility, we will build partnerships with both **nonprofits** and **mission-aligned businesses** that already have a foothold in environmental, civic, and consumer engagement spaces.

- **Charitable & Environmental Organizations**

We'll seek alignment, and to leverage our collective reach, with groups focused on:

- Paper waste and deforestation
- Climate policy and awareness
- Sustainable consumer habits

Potential partners include:

- **Citizens Climate Lobby**
- **Sierra Club**
- **Canopy**
- **The Story of Stuff Project**
- **NRDC**
- **EarthDay.org**

These groups can help co-sponsor campaigns, co-author content, and extend our message to their established networks.

- **Civic Organizations with Local Influence**

We will also partner with influential nonprofits like **Rotary International**, which has long-standing credibility at local, regional, and global levels. Their emphasis on **community service**, **climate responsibility**, and **youth education** makes them a powerful ally in raising awareness and organizing grassroots action. Rotary chapters can host events, share materials, and promote anti-junk mail efforts through existing channels.

- **Mission-Aligned Businesses - Collaboration**

We'll actively collaborate with:

- **PaperKarma**, to promote the app as a go-to tool for mail opt-outs
- **Other digital mailbox or decluttering services**
- **Eco-conscious brands** looking to reduce packaging waste and paper usage

Together, these partnerships will enable us to launch large-scale campaigns, access new audiences, and position the anti-junk mail movement as part of the larger fight against climate change and consumer waste.

Conclusion of Phase 1A and 1B

Phase 1 is all about building the foundation—educating the public, engaging online voices, aligning with powerful institutions, reducing the effectiveness in real terms and to drive credibility and scale.

Junk mail is a problem.- The outrage is growing--And with the right message, messengers, and momentum—**we can shift culture and policy** toward a cleaner, smarter, and more sustainable future.

REALITY CHECK

Phase 1 rests almost entirely with us—individuals, coworkers, families, friends, and our wider networks. The louder and more unified our collective voice becomes during this initial phase, the greater our chance of achieving meaningful change. As we progress through Phase 1 and transition into Phases 2 and 3, our goal will be to actively engage local, state, and federal officials, as well as unelected bureaucrats. The momentum we build during Phase 1 will lay the groundwork necessary to drive genuine and lasting change.

Phase 2 – Significant Pricing, Operational, and Structural Changes

Phase 2 builds on the awareness created in Phase 1, leading into significant restructuring of the pricing model, operational costs, and delivery methods necessary to effect real change. Phase 2 is broken down into two approaches. Changing the demand pattern and dynamics for bulk mail producers by employing pricing tools will change the dynamics effecting the demand for USPS products. The second approach is to enact strategies that will reduce costs for USPS and increase efficiency to offset the expected decline in revenue resulting from enacting the pricing model changes. It is inevitable that demand for traditional legacy USPS products will decline as digital alternatives continue to take business away for USPS. The migration to more efficient and effective digital means of communication will only accelerate as pricing models are shifted per this report. This phase will also require substantial effort to assist and guide bulk mail users toward digital alternatives so as to blunt resistance to the initiatives proposed herein.

a) USPS Pricing Adjustments:

Pricing mechanisms will be the primary driver of behavior changes relating to bulk mail. In the case of USPS bulk mail, making the cost higher will naturally result in reducing the use of bulk mail and a corresponding shift to other means.

- ***Main behavior driver:*** Gradually raise bulk mail prices over four years, aligning them with first-class mail rates while reducing demand for bulk mail
- Concurrently lower first-class mail pricing over the same four years, achieving parity and encouraging the use of first-class mail.

Historically, the USPS has disproportionately relied on incremental revenue from low or no-profit sources like bulk mail and certain commercial contracts while first-class users were simply looked at as "elastic" in demand, creating unfair pricing disparities between the two main classes of mail. Basically, first class mail users subsidized bulk mail users. Correcting this imbalance by

using market forces (pricing) will naturally decrease bulk mail demand immediately, thereby primarily limiting its future viability to critical uses such as political or matters of government importance requiring traditional paper communication.

b) **Promotion and Training for Digital Solutions:**

Launch comprehensive promotional and training initiatives designed to help businesses and organizations seamlessly transition to digital marketing methods. These initiatives should provide practical incentives, such as tax credits or grants, and robust resources, including workshops and online tools, to ensure a smooth transition. The program should emphasize the long-term advantages of sustainable and economically viable communication strategies, highlighting cost savings, increased efficiency, and reduced environmental impact.

c) **Addressing the Digital Divide:**

Develop comprehensive outreach programs to provide marginalized and rural communities with essential technologies such as smartphones, computers, and reliable internet access. By partnering with technology providers, local governments, and nonprofit organizations, these initiatives can deliver affordable or subsidized devices, digital literacy training, and connectivity solutions. Government-backed subsidies and public-private partnerships can help bridge these gaps, ensuring equitable access to modern communication tools and empowering all communities to participate fully in the digital age.

d) **Centralized delivery:**

While centralized delivery to new construction and multi-family housing is already mandated across the country, making sure this method is fully implemented country wide for existing delivery locations is key to a full-scale implementation and offers significant savings primarily the result of reduction of “last mile delivery costs”. Centralized delivery is most commonly implemented in new housing developments, multi-unit residential buildings, and some rural areas. Transitioning existing neighborhoods to centralized systems remains a logistical and political challenge.

Centralizing mail delivery—whether by requiring customers to pick up mail at a “cluster box” (also known as a gang box) or, in very rural areas, at a local post office—can indeed reduce last-mile delivery costs. The last mile of delivery (i.e., the trip from a carrier’s route to each individual mailbox or doorstep) is one of the most expensive parts of postal operations.

As of the most recent available data from the United States Postal Service (USPS), there are approximately **163 million discrete delivery points** across the United States. These delivery points include residential, business, and PO box addresses. As of recent USPS reports, approximately 43% of delivery points in the United States are served by centralized delivery systems, including cluster mailboxes and PO boxes. This equates to roughly 70 million of the 163 million total delivery points leaving 93 million doorstep deliveries each and every day, 6 days a week.

Following is a summary of why centralized delivery can save money (and CO2 emissions) and the ballpark estimates of potential savings.

1. Fewer Stops Per Route
 - A carrier making door-to-door deliveries must stop at each address. Even a couple of extra seconds at each stop adds up across a route with hundreds (or thousands) of addresses.
 - When cluster boxes or PO boxes are used, a carrier consolidates many deliveries into a single stop, reducing time, labor, and vehicle costs.
2. Reduced Wear and Tear on Vehicles
 - Stopping less frequently and driving fewer miles lowers fuel consumption and vehicle maintenance costs.
3. Shorter Carrier Routes
 - If some addresses are converted from door delivery to centralized delivery, routes may be optimized (shortened), potentially requiring fewer carriers overall.
4. Labor Savings
 - Labor is among the Postal Service's largest costs. Saving even a few minutes per route, multiplied by the millions of delivery points across the country, can yield significant labor cost reductions.

Various studies—by the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and others—have tried to quantify how much the Postal Service could save by converting more delivery points to centralized or curbside delivery.

While exact numbers differ depending on assumptions, the following figures can serve as ballpark estimates:

1. Cost per Delivery Mode
 - Delivering to the door (i.e., walking up to a house or apartment): often cited around \$350 (or more) per address per year.
 - Delivering to a curbside mailbox: approximately \$220–\$240 per address per year.
 - Delivering to a cluster box (or gang box): around \$160 per address per year.
2. Annual Nationwide Savings
 - If a significant portion of door-delivery addresses were converted to curbside or centralized delivery, savings could be in the range of \$2–\$4+ billion annually, according to GAO and USPS OIG reports.
 - Some analysts suggest even higher totals if most door deliveries were converted, though universal conversion would face legal, political, and practical obstacles.
3. Rural vs. Urban Differences
 - In very rural areas, it may already be standard practice for residents to pick up mail at a local post office or cluster box (especially where it is impractical to operate a long driving route).
 - In denser urban or suburban areas, cluster boxes can dramatically reduce the number of stops, but property constraints, local regulations, and customer preferences can pose challenges.



Feasibility and Considerations

1. Customer and Community Resistance
 - Many homeowners (and businesses) prefer the convenience of door delivery. Resistance may come from those who rely on doorstep delivery due to mobility issues or simply out of tradition and preference. 2
2. Infrastructure Requirements
 - Installing cluster boxes in established neighborhoods can require zoning approvals, identification of communal sites, and security features (e.g., well-lit, accessible locations).
3. Legal and Policy Hurdles
 - Congress and the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) have a say in how USPS delivers mail. Changes to traditional service could require legislative or regulatory support.
4. Security and Accessibility
 - Centralized boxes can help secure mail better than an individual curbside box, but they must meet accessibility guidelines (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act standards).

Switching more addresses to centralized (cluster) delivery or requiring pickup at a local post office in very rural areas can significantly reduce USPS last-mile delivery costs. Annual savings in the multi-billion-dollar range can be achieved assuming high numbers of deliveries are converted from “door delivery” to either curbside or cluster boxes.

Phase 3: Implement a 3-day delivery schedule

Does anyone honestly believe that mail needs to be delivered daily – 6 days a week? A 6 day per week delivery promise is hard to seriously support anymore. That is especially obvious when considering the quantity of junk mail that is being delivered 6 days per week. With upwards of 90% of daily mail in the junk category. Reducing mail delivery to 3 days, it can be argued that reducing bulk mail delivery by 50% will result in saving 50% of the current CO2 emissions.

The idea of transitioning the United States Postal Service (USPS) delivery schedule from six days per week to three days has significant implications.

There would be many possible savings including:

1. Cost Savings

- Labor Costs:
 - Reducing the number of delivery days decreases labor expenses, including wages, overtime, and associated benefits. Personnel costs account for a substantial share of USPS's budget.
- Fuel and Maintenance:
 - Fewer delivery days result in lower fuel consumption and reduced wear and tear on delivery vehicles. This aligns with USPS's ongoing efforts to optimize its fleet and reduce costs.

2. Environmental Impact

- Reduced Emissions:
 - Fewer delivery days would decrease vehicle-related carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, supporting environmental sustainability goals.
- Waste Management:
 - A reduced schedule may discourage excessive junk mail distribution, as advertisers might find the longer intervals between deliveries less appealing. This could indirectly reduce environmental waste.

3. Operational Efficiency

- Consolidating deliveries to fewer days allows the USPS to streamline routes and resources, improving efficiency. This could result in better reliability and an enhanced customer experience.

4. Alignment with Modern Trends

- **The rise of digital communication has significantly reduced the volume of first-class mail. A three-day delivery schedule better reflects this declining demand while maintaining service for essential items such as packages and medications.**

1. Public Resistance

- Dependency on Frequent Deliveries:
 - Many individuals, particularly in rural areas, rely on daily mail for essential items like medications, financial documents, and critical correspondence. A reduced schedule could provoke strong opposition.

2. Business Impacts

- Businesses relying on frequent deliveries, such as those using bulk mail for marketing or requiring timely document exchanges, may experience disruptions.

3. Competitive Disadvantage

- Private carriers (e.g., FedEx, UPS) could capitalize on USPS's reduced schedule, potentially taking over more market share in package delivery. This could exacerbate USPS's financial challenges.

4. Regulatory and Legislative Challenges

- USPS operates under a universal service mandate. Changing delivery schedules could face significant political and legal hurdles, especially if stakeholders view such changes as undermining equity or accessibility.

Estimates and Feasibility

1. Cost Savings Estimates

- Studies have shown that reducing delivery to five days could save approximately \$2 billion annually. Moving to three days could potentially triple these savings, depending on implementation and adjustments.

2. Operational Adjustments

- Route Optimization:
 - Consolidated delivery routes will require significant planning and reorganization. Implementing a three-day schedule necessitates advanced logistical planning to ensure efficiency and customer satisfaction.
- Piloting the Program:
 - Testing the three-day schedule in select regions could provide data-driven insights into cost-effectiveness and customer impact.

3. Impact on Bulk Mail Revenue

- A reduced schedule might make bulk mail less appealing, potentially reducing its usage. While this could diminish USPS revenue in the short term, it could encourage innovation in digital alternatives or higher-margin services. This possibility could arguably be considered a benefit certainly from an environmental perspective.

4. Customer Communication

- A clear and consistent communication plan is vital to mitigate public concerns. Educating customers about the rationale and benefits of the change can help ease the transition.

Transitioning to a three-day delivery schedule offers significant potential for cost savings, environmental benefits, and operational efficiency. However, it also presents challenges, including public resistance, regulatory hurdles, and impacts on businesses and revenue. A phased approach, starting with pilot programs and robust stakeholder engagement, can address objections while maximizing benefits. By aligning with modern trends and sustainability goals, this shift could help position the USPS as a forward-thinking and resilient organization.

Revenue: One important factor to consider is Amazon's reliance on USPS for last-mile delivery, including Sunday deliveries. Any changes to delivery schedules could impact Amazon's logistics operations, potentially leading to adjustments in their service models or increased costs. Collaboration with major corporate partners like Amazon will be essential to ensure a smooth transition that minimizes disruptions while maintaining service reliability. But keeping on mind that package delivery for large accounts like Amazon are generally delivered at a loss to the USPS thereby gaining revenue but at a loss further challenging package feasibility over the long-term.

Automation and innovation: Investing in automation and forging partnerships with private carriers for non-critical deliveries could further streamline operations. These measures would enhance efficiency while upholding the USPS's universal service mandate, ensuring equitable access to mail services across the country.

Privatization of the USPS – Phase 4

No discussion of USPS restructuring would be complete without mentioning the potential long-term solution of privatizing the USPS. Privatizing could introduce competition, fostering efficiency and innovation. Examples from Germany (Deutsche Post) and the UK (Royal Mail) demonstrate the potential benefits of privatization, including global logistics expansion and improved cost management. However, these transitions require careful planning to ensure public service obligations and equitable access, especially for rural communities.

The move to a private version of USPS will face great resistance. While privatizing the USPS is not within the scope of this report, the discussion herein is meant to open our eyes to future possibilities. The project would be huge in scope and likely predictably unsuccessful due primarily to political resistance. The discussion at this time is limited introduction only.

9. Estimated Outcomes (near term)

Estimated 2-to-4-year financial outcomes are described below:

- 1) An increase in bulk mail pricing of 50% will cause a reduction in usage by users of 20% while government and essential services mail remains the same volume
- 2) A reduction in first-class pricing from 73 cents to 40 cents will increase usage of first-class by 50% resulting in a net decline in revenue.

- 3) No reduction in delivery days will be achieved in the first 4 years due to political resistance
- 4) Operational savings primarily the result of retirement of legacy employees and compensation structures will amount to \$1.5 billion
- 5) Continued migration to centralized delivery will add between 20 and 30 million conversions from door delivery to centralized resulting in at least a \$2 billion savings which can be much greater depending on absorption of the policy
- 6) **In the near term, the USPS will most likely see the losses increase as a result of these changes. Realistically, those losses will probably increase anyway due to natural digital conversion. Continued restructuring and cost cutting, will be necessary.**

Category	Scenario/Change	Estimated Annual Impact (USD)
First-Class Mail Revenue	Rate reduced from \$0.73 to \$0.40 assumes a 50% volume increase	-7 billion (revenue loss)
Bulk Mail Revenue	Rate increased from \$0.20 to \$0.40; assumes essential political/government mail usage remains unchanged	-2 billion (revenue loss)
Centralized Delivery Continued Expansion	Add 20% more centralized delivery points	+\$4–6 billion (savings)
Retirement Cost Savings	Replacement of legacy employees	+\$1.5 billion (savings annually)
	Net Impact	-\$7 billion (loss)

10. Summary

In a fast-paced digital world exploding with AI-driven solutions that deliver quantum efficiency gains, alongside a heightened global awareness of the need to preserve our planet and its resources, the era of indiscriminately bulk-mailing paper-based products must come to an end. Eliminating bulk mail is not merely an environmental initiative; it represents a transformative step toward greater societal efficiency, economic innovation, and global responsibility. This obvious problem, affecting everyone, cannot be ignored any longer. It is time to modernize our mail services and align them with the sustainable practices of the 21st century.

References

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9. "Advancements in Digital Marketing," Digital Strategy Forum, 2023.

APPENDIX

- **Call to Action**
- **Sample Letter**
- **FLYER**

Phase 1 - SAS

Junk Mail: A Call to Action

You can do something that will make a difference—one household at a time

Shared Goal: To end the outdated, wasteful practice of junk mail that drains time, kills trees, and other resources. Let's reclaim our mailboxes and show we are serious about the environment.

Why It Matters

- **Resource Waste:** While Junk mail may be an inexpensive marketing tool for advertisers, it is environmentally expensive for our planet.
- **Environmental Impact:** Over 100 million trees cut annually in the U.S. to produce mail that often goes straight to the trash or at best the recycler.
- **Time & Energy:** Sorting and discarding unwanted mail wastes your time—day in and day out. This is mindless waste.

STOP - ALERT - SHARE

1. **STOP - Use these tools to stop what you can right now!!!**
 - **PaperKarma** (PaperKarma.com) (\$25/year but well worth it): Snap a photo of unwanted mail; they handle the unsubscribe.
 - **DMACHoice.org** (ten-year coverage for \$6): Removes you from many direct marketing lists.
 - **CatalogChoice.org** (free, simple account creation): Quickly stop most catalogs.
 - **Writing note** "Return to Sender" on mail pieces has also been successful.
2. **ALERT-**
 - **Contact Elected Officials:** Let them know junk mail is a serious environmental issue.
 - **Easy Tools:**
 - <https://democracy.io> (simple, one-click way to email Congress)
 - <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials> (drills down to local level)
 - Use the attached letter template to cut and paste a consistent message to your elected officials
3. **SHARE-**
 - Share this flyer with friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers. Everyone gets junk mail. And everyone wants it to stop.
 - Forward this flyer. Start the conversation—there's no downside!

Take Action Today

1. Download PaperKarma, sign up at DMACHoice.org (\$6/10 years) and CatalogChoice.org.
2. Go to: <https://democracy.io> to tell your representatives that junk mail is wasteful and go one step further and use: www.usa.gov/elected-officials to expand the message to more local levels and increase the effectiveness
3. Share the word with your network—every voice counts.

Common sense begins today!

SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL to be sent to public officials

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing to bring your attention to an issue that significantly impacts the environment and affects every household receiving mail in the United States: the proliferation of junk mail. This widespread practice not only contributes to environmental damage but also represents a troubling societal complacency as we continue to accept unnecessary waste each day.

We respectfully ask that you share the enclosed materials within your network and distribute them to others who care deeply about environmental conservation and practical common-sense solutions. Elevating this issue to the "action" stage requires collective effort and advocacy.

Addressing junk mail is neither a Democratic nor a Republican issue—it is an American issue. While seemingly small in isolation, its broader symbolism is undeniable. How can we credibly address major environmental concerns if we continue, every day, to perpetuate unnecessary waste through junk mail?

This outdated communication practice has long outlived its purpose, resulting in significant environmental impacts:

- Approximately 100 million trees are cut down annually in the U.S. for junk mail production.
- Junk mail contributes all together an estimated 11.4 million metric tons of CO2 emissions each year.

We urge you to reflect the voices of your constituents by supporting or initiating legislation aimed at ending this wasteful practice. Taking action now sends a clear message about our collective commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable resource management.

For further information and resources, please visit www.junkmailwaste.com.

Thank you for your attention and support.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Contact Information]

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIETAL CRAZINESS

JUNK MAIL

THE TIME HAS COME TO END THE MADNESS

Questions???

- Does receiving junk mail delivered to your mailbox every day of your life seem wasteful?
- Have you been programmed to the task of taking junk mail directly from your mailbox to the trash or recycle bin?
- Does it seem silly that, in a digital and environmentally aware age, we still employ outdated, inefficient, and environmentally irresponsible methods of communication?

THE PROBLEM

If Bulk Mail, commonly referred to as Junk Mail, is societally and environmentally crazy - Then how and why is it so prevalent in our everyday lives?

Short answer: Because we are subsidizing its use through USPS policies that encourage, through low pricing, the use of bulk mailing for various groups to reach target audiences:

- Political causes
- Charitable causes
- Small business direct marketing
- Credit card solicitations
- Public awareness



*****USPS estimates over 77 billion pieces of bulk mail are mailed out each year...and incredibly and as crazy as it sounds, that number is growing*****

ENVIRONMENTAL COST

- 100 million trees are consumed annually
 - Plus the loss of 100 M trees carbon sequestration
- 11.4 million metric tons of annual CO2 emissions are emitted in the process
- Equivalent to 2.5 million passenger cars emissions

Eliminating, or at a minimum radically reducing, the use of Bulk Mail has societal and environmental benefits beyond the numbers

How can we be pretend to be serious without addressing this obvious concern??



CHALLENGES

- USPS reliance on revenue for viability
- Government mandated results in slow changes
- Small business reliance on cheap means of direct marketing
- Jobs created by Bulk mail process
- Access and equity especially to rural or underserved communities
- Official communications must have a proven replacement means
- Alternatives may not be as effective
- Cost cutting at USPS will be necessary to offset reduced revenue
- Digital means may not be available everywhere

GET INVOLVED

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