



**American
Forest & Paper
Association**

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April 13, 2015

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Attn: Secretary
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

**RE: DOCKET NO L-2014-2411278, PROPOSED RULEMAKING ORDER
AMENDING EXISTING REGULATIONS TO PROHIBIT TARIFF PROVISIONS
THAT CHARGE CUSTOMERS A FEE TO RECEIVE A PAPER BILL, 45 PaB.
1264**

Dear Sir/Madam:

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) would like to thank the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission for amending the Public Utility Code by prohibiting state utilities from the imposition of a fee to customers who choose to receive paper billing statements.

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) serves to advance a sustainable U.S. pulp, paper, packaging, and wood products manufacturing industry through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. AF&PA member companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative - *Better Practices, Better Planet 2020*. The forest products industry accounts for nearly 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures approximately \$210 billion in products annually, and employs nearly 900,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 47 states.

AF&PA's sustainability initiative - *Better Practices, Better Planet 2020* - is the latest example of our members' proactive commitment to the long-term success of our industry, our communities and our environment. We have long been responsible stewards of our planet's resources. Our member companies have collectively made significant progress in each of the following goals, which comprise one of the most extensive quantifiable sets of sustainability goals for a U.S. manufacturing industry: increasing paper recovery for recycling; improving energy efficiency; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; promoting sustainable forestry practices; improving workplace safety; and reducing water use.

A significant portion of our population either prefers or relies upon paper to receive communication from its government and service providers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2013 report on Computer and internet use in the United States, the ability to access information electronically is still not readily available to many Americans – 25.6 percent of the U.S. population lacks broadband access at home. In a recent Pew Internet Project report, 41 percent of Americans age 65 and older do not use the internet or email. Many institutions and government agencies are increasingly making access to forms and information available only on the internet, leaving many Americans out of the necessary flow of information and interaction.

Customer preference for paper billing was confirmed by a recent study by the United States Postal Service: *“Will the Check be in the Mail? An Examination of Electronic and Transactional Mail.”* This survey found that, while many people may choose to pay bills online, the vast majority (91 percent) choose to receive bills and statements on paper through the mail.

Americans of all ages living in all regions of our country deserve to have equal access to information and services, either digitally or on paper, without discriminatory fees. We applaud the Commission for protecting customer interests of those who elect to receive a paper bill without penalty and urge swift implementation of the rule.

Please feel free to contact Abigail Turner, Manager, Government Affairs, AF&PA at (202) 463-2596 or abigail_turner@afandpa.org for further information.

Respectfully submitted,



Cathy Foley
Vice President, Paper Group
American Forest & Paper Association