

Pass a Municipal Resolution on Junk Mail

This guide will help you encourage your local city council to endorse a Do Not Mail registry for your state. Passing a symbolic resolution on junk mail makes sense for cities across the country. It's an easy action for local governments to take in order to move the national Do Not Mail Campaign forward.

How to Pass a Do Not Mail Resolution:

1. **Identify a Sponsor** - Visit your City Council's webpage and find out who represents your neighborhood. Contact your representative's office by phone or email and ask them to sponsor the (already written) resolution calling for a statewide Do Not Mail Registry. Be sure to tell them why you support the resolution and why you think they should too! (*See the sample talking points and draft resolution below*) If your representative won't sponsor, you can ask others on the city council until someone is willing.
2. **Figure out the Process** – Ask your new Sponsor's office what the process is from here. When will the resolution be voted upon? Will there be a public hearing or a chance to make public comments? Who on the council is most likely to support/oppose?
3. **Show Public Support** - If there is to be a public hearing, recruit friends and family to come. Prep yourself and others to speak at the hearing. Find different voices – like small business owners, city officials, environmentalists, community members, etc. to show broad support for the issue. Also, before the vote, ask everyone you know to call in to support the Do Not Mail Resolution. If you can get a letter to the editor or Op-Ed placed, that would help spread the word. You can also ask local radio stations or blogs to announce the upcoming vote and encourage citizens to call in. (For more advice and helpful materials during this phase, please contact ForestEthics. We'll be happy to help you strategize.)

What To Say To Your Local Representative:

Dear Council Member/Supervisor [x],

As a concerned resident in your district, I would like to request that you introduce a resolution calling on our state legislators to establish a Do Not Mail Registry. The passage of this resolution will help build awareness around an important environmental issue that our state legislators should consider more closely. I respectfully urge our city to become a leader in promoting the country's first statewide Do Not Mail Registry – thereby protecting the environment and cutting out unnecessary waste from our municipal systems. In an era of diminishing natural resources and the ongoing threat of climate change, we can no longer afford to promote the lackluster inefficiencies of the junk mail industry and its mismanagement of our resources.

Thank You.
[Your Name]

[Your Email]
[Your Phone]
[Your Address]

Other Do Not Mail Talking Points:

1. **A statewide Do Not Mail Registry would alleviate stress on municipal waste disposal systems;** nearly half of the 6.5 million tons of junk mail sent to Americans each year ends up in our landfills unopened!
2. **Stopping junk mail will help combat invasion of privacy;** junk credit card offers include personal information that makes us vulnerable to identity theft, and when we're out of town, the piles of junk mail left on the door step is a clear signal you're out of town.
3. **Junk Mail is annoying and wasteful;** the majority of Americans don't like it, yet direct mailers send out over 100 billion pieces each year. All that junk mail requires the pulp of over 100 million trees; destroying our environment and contributing to climate change. When polled, 89% of people said they would support a Do Not Mail registry.

Resolution Template:

[Requesting (*Your State*) Establish a Do Not Mail Registry]

Resolution urging the (*Your State*) State Legislature to establish a Do Not Mail Registry

WHEREAS, The amount of junk mail delivered in the United States each year has substantial environmental and social costs that can be significantly reduced by the creation of a Do Not Mail Registry; and,

WHEREAS, The production, distribution, and disposal of junk mail contributes to climate change by producing 51 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions¹- equivalent to that of over 9 million automobiles² - at a point when current environmental challenges demand significant and urgent reductions in our carbon footprint; and,

¹ ForestEthics. "Climate Report". Appendix A. 2008, pp. 5

² The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates average carbon dioxide equivalent emissions as 8.8 kilograms per gallon of gas, and average fuel economy of passenger cars and light trucks as 20.3 miles per gallon.

WHEREAS, The amount of paper required to produce the 105 billion pieces of junk mail distributed each year in the United States³ requires the annual harvest of approximately 100 million trees⁴ that, if left standing, would act as important carbon storehouses; and,

WHEREAS, approximately 44% of all unsolicited junk mail arrives in landfills unopened⁵, thereby placing unnecessary stress on our waste disposal systems; and,

WHEREAS, Junk mail is an invasion of privacy and has the potential to contribute to the ongoing problem of identity theft; and,

WHEREAS, The requested Do Not Mail Registry would be modeled after the national Do Not Call Registry, which is the most popular consumer rights bill in history; and,

WHEREAS, 93% of likely voters and 89% of likely voters nationwide voiced support for a Do Not Mail Registry in a 2007 national poll commissioned by Zogby International⁶; and,

WHEREAS, A multitude of states have previously proposed Do Not Mail bills including; Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and Washington⁷; and,

WHEREAS, The success of statewide Do Not Mail registries will pave the way for an equivalent registry at the national level; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the **(your city)** Board of Supervisors urges the State of **(your state)** to establish a Do Not Mail registry to provide persons of **(your state)** with an effective, user-friendly system to voluntarily stop the receipt of unsolicited direct mail to their property; and, be it

³ United States Postal Service (USPS). "The Household Diary Study: Mail Use & Attitudes in FY 2006." March 2007, pp. 1.

⁴ Center for New American Dream calculation from Conservatree and U.S. Forest Service statistics.

⁵ 41pounds.org: <http://41pounds.org/impact/default.asp>.

⁶ National Poll Commissioned by the Center for a New American Dream and conducted from September 13-16, 2007 by Zogby International. The survey was administered by phone to 1011 likely voters nationwide. Findings from the survey have a margin of error of +/- 3.1%.

⁷ Direct Marketing Association, "State Do Not Mail Bills – 2007," available at: <http://www.the-dma.org/donotmail/2007legislation.sthtml>, accessed October 7, 2008.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors shall forward a fully conformed copy of this resolution to **(your city)** state legislative delegation as well as the President Pro Tem of the **(your state)** Senate and Speaker of the **(your state)** Assembly.

