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April 13, 2004

Federal Trade Commission
CAN-SPAM Act
Post Office Box 1030
Merrifield, VA
22116-1030

Re: CAN-SPAM Act Rulemaking, Project No. R411008
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To the Commissioners,

I applaud your efforts to curb the problem of unsolicited bulk email. However, I am concerned about the proposed requirement for merchants to maintain suppression lists.

There are so many problems and costs associated with this idea, and so much damage done to consumers and businesses alike, that I feel I must urge you to consider this matter most carefully.

Requirement of the use of suppression lists will seriously damage many of the legitimate publications available on the net. This will be a particular burden to certain groups—such as stay-at-home parents and retirees who operate their internet business as sole proprietors and just don't have the staff or man hours to comply with these proposed regulations. My specific concern is for harm to publishers who require permission from the consumer prior to adding them to any list.

They're not who CAN-SPAM was designed to put out of business, but this requirement will very likely have that effect.

There's also the potential for significant harm to consumers, because of the problem of properly knowing their intent when they unsubscribe from a list. On top of that, these suppression lists could easily fall into the hands of spammers, leading to more spam instead of less.

Spammers hide behind different names and email addresses. They easily go underground and resurface quickly with a new name, a new ISP, but the same old scam. Are we going to implement government agencies to pursue scammers and enforce these proposed regulations? At how many millions or Billions of taxpayer money?

This ruling will hurt the very people it is written to help.

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I was quite surprised at the potential problems this ruling could involve, and urge you in the strongest possible terms to reconsider its implementation in light of these problems.

Respectfully,

Karen Elizabeth Halbrook
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U.S.A.

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