

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

October 19, 2009 at 10:46am

Junk mail's carbon footprint

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NCR Today

Senders of junk mail in the United States are causing carbon emissions equal to nine million cars, according to a forest preservation group.

Pressure group ForestEthics released the report, *Climate Change Enclosed: Junk Mail's Effect on Global Warming*, recently to support its new campaign for a "do not mail" registry. The study, which is based on figures from the Environmental Defense Fund, the Environmental Paper Network, and industry data, found that half the carbon expenditure relating from junk mail comes from the removal of forest wood, while another 20 per cent comes from the emissions created at paper plants during production.

It takes more than 100 million trees to produce the total volume of junk mail that arrives in American mailboxes each year—that's the equivalent of clearcutting the entire Rocky Mountain National Park every 4 months.

"In 2005, junk mail surpassed what we call first-class mail as the majority of what the U.S. Postal Service was delivering," said ForestEthics spokesman William Craven. "In the last two years, 19 bills have been introduced in state legislatures in the US. None of them have yet passed. What it shows is that there is significant popular demand for a solution to junk mail, and enough so that some politicians felt that they had a stable foundation on which to introduce legislation. But there is also significant opposition and well financed opposition to a do-not-mail registry."

The UK Government already enables people to opt out of receiving addressed mail, and is working with the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) to create an opt-out scheme for unaddressed mail. The DMA is also supporting a standard, for minimizing the environmental impact of junk mail.

For more information on the environmental impact of junk mail and what you can do to stop it, go to Do

Not Mail: The Facts about Junk Mail

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