

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



February 20, 2012

Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 South Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing to formally request that the Utilities & Transportation Commission update WAC 480-120-251 to eliminate the requirement that directory companies distribute the white pages to customers in their service area.

In the past, the white pages have played a crucial role in connecting with people. Having a telephone number is of little value if you cannot readily access other people's numbers and they cannot access your number. When the required delivery of white pages was first established, it served the important public purpose of assuring each resident had easy access to every other resident's phone number. While there are still people who rely on phone books, these numbers have declined significantly and continue to shrink. Between 2005 and 2008, the number of households depending on the white pages for information decreased from 25% to 11%. Given the sizeable monetary and non-monetary costs associated with white pages production, delivery and disposal, it is time to reconsider the mandatory delivery requirement in WAC 480-120-251.

Changes in technology have changed the way we connect and these changes have rendered the white pages obsolete for large segments of our population. Many people now turn to internet versions of the white pages for contact information. Additionally, the increased use of mobile phones and the trend toward using mobile phones in place of traditional landline phones has decreased the utility of printed white pages. The value of the white pages comes in part from its comprehensive nature. Because mobile phone numbers are not published in the phone book, the white pages will become less comprehensive and therefore less valuable.

Phone companies, who bear a large portion of the cost, and the public support doing away with mandatory delivery in favor of an opt-in method. The costs of the white pages go beyond the large sums of money spent by phone companies in producing and distributing a new phone book every fifteen months. Nationally, over five million trees are cut down each year to print the

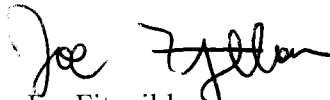
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STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE CLERK
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

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white pages and less than 22% of them are recycled. Our financially strapped local governments are picking up the tab for disposing of these large books, many of which are never cracked open.

On balance, we believe the time has come for each household to make the decision regarding whether it is necessary to receive the white pages.

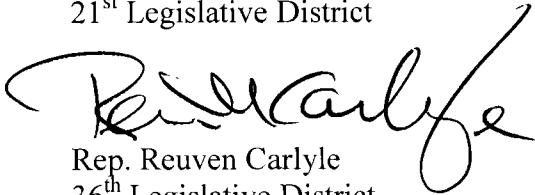
Sincerely,



Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon
34th Legislative District



Rep. Marko Liias
21st Legislative District



Rep. Reuven Carlyle
36th Legislative District