

**Statement of Meta Brophy
Director, Procurement Operations
Consumer Reports
before the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and the Census
United States House of Representatives**

April 10, 2013

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss Consumer Reports' relationship with the Postal Service.

Consumer Reports is the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports* and *Shop Smart* magazines, as well as newsletters and other special interest publications for consumers. The Consumer Reports National Testing and Research Center in Yonkers, New York, is the largest nonprofit educational and consumer product testing center in the world. Consumer Reports surveys millions of consumers about their experiences with products and services. Consumer Reports buys all the products that it rates, and does not accept free test samples from manufacturers or paid advertising. We derive revenue mainly through subscriptions and donations. Our mission, since 1936, is to work for a fair, just, and safe marketplace for all consumers and to empower consumers to protect themselves.

Consumer Reports spends more than \$32 million on postage in the United States each year. We primarily use First-Class Mail, nonprofit Periodicals Mail, and nonprofit Standard Mail. Consumer Reports relies on the United States Postal Service to deliver its subscriber mail—that is, magazines, newsletters, premiums, special interest publications, acknowledgments, bills, renewal notices—and to prospect for new subscribers and donors through direct mail solicitations.

My responsibilities at Consumer Reports involve supply chain management including purchasing, high-volume print production and mail distribution for our magazines, newsletters, direct marketing and fundraising mail campaigns, back-end circulation campaigns, premiums, and special publications. My team evaluates current practices and approaches and identifies opportunities for increased efficiency and cost savings. We explore and pursue opportunities for innovation, monitor supplier performance, and manage relationships with key suppliers, including the United States Postal Service and Canada Post.

I serve as the president of the board of directors of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers. I am also a member of the Direct Marketing Association and Magazine Publishers of America.

Consumer Reports has relied on the Postal Service as a vital business partner since our founding more than 75 years ago. Throughout our long association with the Postal Service, we have experienced consistently dependable and reputable service that has been the foundation of our partnership. We trust the Postal Service to deliver our information and communications to consumers.

When Consumer Reports withdrew a report on infant car seats and had to notify our subscribers very quickly, we turned to the Postal Service for assistance. With a mass mailing to more than 3 million households, the Postal Service was key to delivering our message. The Postal Service ensured that our mailing was handled expeditiously and successfully, allowing Consumer Reports to reach millions of members with an explanation of the situation and a promise to strive for accuracy and fairness, all in a very timely manner.

In 2011, we changed our organizational identity from Consumers Union to Consumer Reports to strengthen our brand recognition in the marketplace. The Postal Service provided guidance and assistance in making the change known throughout the national postal network so there was no disruption to our mailings or our business.

Through direct mail solicitations, our marketing efforts will bring in 2 million new subscribers this year across all of our publications. Revenue derived from direct mail and print products is still vitally important to our budget and to our mission. A healthy, financially sound Postal Service is critical to our business now and for the foreseeable future.

As the Postal Service has been rightsizing its operational network to reduce excess capacity in the face of declining mail volumes, we rely on timely communications about those changes to ensure that our data, print, and logistics vendors can adjust plans accordingly. To date, the Postal Service has done a good job of disseminating critical information.

Although a significant portion of our customers and subscribers rely on mail to receive information from us, Consumer Reports is challenged by a pattern of declining growth in a weakened publishing industry and national economy. We are holding the line on expenses as we continue to help consumers and to have an impact in the marketplace. We will continue to support affordable methods of delivery for our products and services.

We encourage the Postal Service to continue to maximize operational efficiency and productivity, making the best use of automation and technological advancements. We need the Postal Service to maintain reliable mail delivery in the most efficient manner possible.

Meta A. Brophy

EXPERIENCE

Consumer Reports, Yonkers, New York

- Director, Procurement Operations
September 2011 – Present
- Director, Publishing Operations
January 2005 – September 2011
- Associate Director, Business Affairs
January 2000 – January 2005
- Manager, Marketing Production
January 1992 – January 2000
- Editorial Production Manager
November 1985 – January 1992

Holt, Rinehart & Winston/CBS, Inc., New York, New York

- Copy Chief
March 1981 – November 1985

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

- Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers
President, Board of Directors, 2008 – Present
- Direct Marketing Association
Committee on Environment and Social Responsibility, 2005 – 2012
- MPA The Association of Magazine Media
Environment Committee 2008 – 2010
Operations Committee 2006 – 2008
- Greater Hudson Valley Postal Customer Council
- Target Marketing Magazine Editorial Advisory Board, November 2010 – Present

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2012 Luminaire Award, IDEAlliance Digital Enterprise Education & Research Foundation
- 2011 DMA International ECHO Green Marketing Award

EDUCATION

Barnard College, Columbia University, B.A. English, History

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Witness Disclosure Requirement – "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

Name:

Meta Brophy

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2010. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

None

2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

Consumer Reports
101 Truman Ave.
Yonkers, NY 10703

I am employed by Consumer Reports and am
Director, Procurement Operations

3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2010, by the entity(ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

None

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature:

Meta Brophy

Date:

April 8, 2013