

September 29, 2020

Joseph J. Simmons
Chairman
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580

William Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Chairman Simons and Attorney General Barr:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, including professional associations, national and regional trade associations, and trade show organizers that represent thousands of small and medium-sized businesses, we write to request your urgent attention to the proliferating fraudulent business practice of selling falsified or stolen association mailing lists, and event attendee and/or exhibitor lists. These practices have serious financial and reputational implications to our organizations.

Associations and trade conferences are an essential part of industry growth and improvement. Industries with strong trade show programs have better performance, driven by the strong exchange of ideas and relationship building that is essential to economic growth. Trade and professional associations and trade show organizers depend on the willingness of people to attend these events, and that willingness is built on trust. These deceptive businesses are undermining the relationship between members, attendees, and official industry sponsors.

Through trademark infringement, false association advertising and unfair competition, they market unofficial and often fake membership and attendee lists. These actions alarm association members, attendees and exhibitors who think their information is being used contrary to official statements from associations and show organizers. It also invariably disappoints prospective purchasers who think they are buying legitimate lists. Millions of dollars are exchanged for this false information that reflects badly on the trade organizers. The damage to brand reputations is impossible to measure, but real. It is crippling many industries from a better exchange of information that would lead to faster economic growth.

We respectfully request your review of this matter without delay. An investigation into this practice would be a great victory for trade and professional associations and other trade show organizers that find themselves the victims of the unauthorized use of their trademark, infringement and illegitimate vendors attempting to sell fake lists and other services. Despite [recent legal victories](#), we already see this deceitful activity to continuing unabated.

Thank you for considering our concerns, and please consider us a resource as you analyze this matter. We appreciate your time and attention.

Sincerely,

American Bankers Association
American Bus Association

American Cleaning Institute
American Coatings Association
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Land Title Association
American Property Casualty Insurance Association
American Society of Association Executives
American Sportfishing Association
AMT - The Association for Manufacturing Technology
Asian American Hotel Owners Association
ASIS International
Associated Builders and Contractors
Associated Equipment Distributors
Association for Education Alliance, LLC
Association for Hose and Accessories Distribution
Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International
Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM)
Association of Wall & Ceiling Industry
Association of Water Technologies
Auto Care Association
Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)
International
Certified Commercial Investment Member Institute
Club Management Association of America
Comexposium US, LLC
Consumer Data Industry Association
Council for Responsible Nutrition
Disability:IN
Electronics Representatives Association
Entertainment Software Association
Equipment Service Association
Fluid Power Distributors Association
GAWDA
Heating, Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Distributors
International
Home & Consumer Products Association (HCPA)
Independent Packaging Association (AICC)
Institute of Food Technologists
Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries
Institute of Real Estate Management
International Association of Plastics Distribution (IAPD)
International Council of Shopping Centers
International Franchise Association
International Housewares Association
International Sealing Distribution Association

International Sign Association
Manufactured Housing Institute
Maryland State Pest Control Association
Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association
MFV Expositions, LLC
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Asian American Chamber of Commerce
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
(NAMIC)
National Association of Professional Employer Organizations
National Association of REALTORS®
National Association of Sign Supply Distributors
National Association of Trailer Manufacturers
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Association of Women Business Owners
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA)
National Beer Wholesalers Association
National Community Pharmacists Association
National Confectioners Association
National Electrical Contractors Association
National Fastener Distributors Association
National Fisheries Institute
National Insulation Association
National Investor Relations Institute
National LGBT Chamber of Commerce
National Marine Distributors Association
National Mining Association
National Retail Federation
National RV Dealers Association
National Small Business Association
North American Association of Floor Covering Distributors
(NAFCD)
Outdoor Power Equipment and Engine Service Association
Pacific-West Fastener Association
Pet Industry Distributors Association
Petroleum Equipment Institute (PEI)
Power Transmission Distributors Association
Professional Beauty Association
Promotional Products Association International
Residential Real Estate Council
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Retail Packaging Association
Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association

Security Hardware Distributors Association
Security Industry Association
SHAPE America
Society for Human Resource Management
Society of Independent Show Organizers
Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR)
Technical Association of the Pulp & Paper Industry (TAPPI)
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association
U.S. Travel Association
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United Veterinary Services Association
Washington Retail Association
Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association
Wine & Spirit Wholesalers of America
Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association (ISSA)
Yacht Brokers Association of America