



# THE AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

January 16, 2008

The Honorable Jack Potter  
Postmaster General  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza  
Washington, D.C. 20260-0010

Dear Mr. Potter,

In recent months the philatelic press has reported on the difficulty of removing self-adhesive stamps from cancelled covers. This has also been a topic of discussion among our members, on various Internet "chat" boards and in a variety of stamp society journals and newsletters.

Due to the significance of this matter as expressed in the attached statement, the Board of Directors of the American Philatelic Society has gone on record to express its concern with regard to the impact this is having on the stamp collecting hobby.

On behalf of its 42,000 members, The American Philatelic Society calls upon the United States Postal Service to produce stamps that can be immersed in water, reliably removed from paper intact, and added to collectors' albums, as U.S. stamps of the past 160 years traditionally have been collected.

We are looking forward to hearing from you on how the USPS will address this matter of significance to the stamp collecting community.

Sincerely,

Peter Mastrangelo  
Executive Director

cc: David Failor, Executive Director - Stamp Services, USPS, 1735 N. Lynn Street, Suite 5013, Arlington, VA 22209-6432

## The American Philatelic Society

### Statement On The Need For The USPS to Find A Solution To Allow For Used Self-Adhesive U.S. Stamps to be Removed From Envelopes By Soaking

Since the advent of stamp collecting in the United States in the 1850s, the vast majority of collectors have begun with used stamps. Used stamps offer individuals — especially children, beginners and those of limited means — a way to enter the hobby in a manner that requires nothing more than a keen interest in collecting. Many such collectors, of course, go on to assemble significant collections of valuable stamps, but the ability to start with attractive, sound canceled stamps soaked off the daily mail is a time-tested gateway to the great pastime of philately.

The overwhelming success of the self-adhesive postage stamps has been one of the great changes in the Postal Service and the hobby over the past two decades. Early issues of self-adhesive stamps included a water-soluble primer to enable the collectible stamp, when immersed in water, to soak cleanly away from the self-adhesive backing. Yet, recently issued self-adhesive stamps are difficult if not impossible to soak off without damage to the stamps.

APS has expressed its concern through inquiries made by staff and our USPS Liaison, John Hotchner. While we have been told that the problem stems from a diminished number of paper suppliers, we have also been assured that the USPS has not abandoned the production of stamps that can be soaked off paper and that it continues to search for solutions.

The American Philatelic Society, on behalf of its 42,000 members, calls upon the United States Postal Service to produce stamps that can be immersed in water, reliably removed from paper intact, and added to collectors' albums, as U.S. stamps of the past 160 years traditionally have been collected.

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Adopted by APS Board of Directors on January 10, 2008:

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