



Consumer Financial
Protection Bureau

1700 G Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20552

February 10, 2014

[CEO Name]

[Bank Address 1]

[Bank Address 2]

Dear [CEO Name]:

I am writing to bring a matter to your attention and strongly urge action on your part. We need to get more Americans to pay closer attention to their credit standing, which would benefit lenders, consumers, and the national economy. You can now, relatively easily, help us achieve this goal.

Consumers often learn the importance of their credit standing when it is too late: after a credit application is denied or identity theft has occurred. Sometimes they fail to see the importance of their credit standing even if it has affected them in material ways, such as being rejected for a job or charged a higher price for a loan. Congress recognized this issue and enhanced consumers' access to their credit reports in the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act of 2003 and later in the Dodd-Frank Act. Still, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has found that fewer than one in five Americans checks his or her credit report in a given year through either free or paid channels. That makes consumers less capable of protecting themselves, less able to benefit by the opportunities that credit can create, and ultimately less productive members of our economy.

Recently several credit card issuers have introduced programs that promise to expand dramatically the number of consumers who are more easily and more routinely acquainted with their credit information. The programs provide customers, directly and at no cost, the same credit scores these issuers obtain in their normal course of managing their customers' credit portfolios along with educational materials to help them understand the score.

Although credit scores provide just a partial picture of one's finances, this could raise awareness of credit issues and prompt busy Americans to review their credit standing. If scores are lower than expected, more consumers may take the initiative to request their credit reports, address concerns, investigate errors or fraud-related entries, and improve negative aspects of their credit usage.

I strongly encourage you to make the credit scores on which you rely available to your customers regularly and freely, along with educational content to help them make use of this information. We will consider this to be a "best practice" in the industry. Doing so through existing channels, such as including credit scores with other on-line account information and on monthly statements, is likely to yield positive returns that outweigh the limited effort involved. Customers who monitor and manage their credit standing may be less likely to become delinquent or to default.

I will be calling you to follow up on this letter, and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Richard Cordray
Director