



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

June 19, 2020

The Honorable John Lewis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lewis:

I write in reply to your May 28, 2020 letter regarding the issuance of certain Economic Impact Payments through prepaid debit cards (EIP Cards).

The Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) have been working with unprecedented speed to issue Economic Impact Payments to American families. This has been achieved through IRS partnering with Treasury's Bureau of Fiscal Service (BFS) to issue nearly 159 million Economic Impact Payments through direct deposit, paper checks, and EIP Cards. The last time a similar stimulus payment effort was undertaken, it took over two months to make 800,000 payments.

EIP Cards are part of Treasury's U.S. Debit Card program, which provides prepaid debit card services to federal agencies for the electronic delivery of non-benefit payments. About 3.6 million EIP Cards have been issued, of which more than 73 percent have been activated. We believe the vast majority of recipients are finding these cards easy to use and appreciate that EIP Cards can be used for free or with minimal fees for optional services. Information regarding free services, as well as a fee schedule for optional services, is included with the card when delivered and is also publicly available at [EIPCard.com](https://www.eipcard.com/).¹ Treasury and IRS have coordinated with consumer and financial organizations, as well as other Federal agencies, to promote awareness about the EIP Card and how to use it for free. Treasury's financial agent for the U.S. Debit Card program and the EIP Card issuer, MetaBank—along with its partners Fiserv and Visa—also have promoted this message through the press, social media, and paid advertising.

The distribution of EIP Cards was determined by BFS and based on maximizing Economic Impact Payment production capacity between BFS's paper check and debit card facilities to deliver the remaining Economic Impact Payments as safely and rapidly as possible. BFS considered factors such as ATM network coverage and state-level familiarity with prepaid cards. These considerations resulted in the selection of the payment files associated with the Austin, Texas, and Andover, Massachusetts IRS facilities.

While we believe Americans will generally prefer receiving an EIP Card in lieu of a paper check, the manner of delivering EIP Cards in a "plain envelope"—a security feature to prevent fraud or theft—was unfamiliar for some recipients and resulted in a limited amount being inadvertently discarded. As of June 17, approximately 44,000 replacement cards have been requested, roughly

¹ See <https://www.eipcard.com/fee-schedule/>.

1 percent of all cards issued. Replacement cards take 7-10 days to arrive in the mail. Instructions on how to request a replacement card are publicly available at EIPCard.com.² As reports of lost cards became known, Treasury quickly worked with MetaBank to address this matter. We are pleased to inform you that prior to the date of your letter, the cardholder agreement and fee schedule for EIP Cards was updated to waive the fee for the first reissuance of any EIP card, and any initial reissuance fee that had been charged to a recipient from an earlier date has since been reversed.

Finally, to help recipients protect themselves and the payments they receive, IRS has published information to help consumers better understand and identify potential scams, and BFS is sharing information with state Attorneys General offices and congressional offices so that they can also appropriately support consumers on a local level.

If you have further questions, please direct your staff to contact the Office of Legislative Affairs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frederick W. Vaughan".

Frederick W. Vaughan
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Legislative Affairs

cc: The Honorable Suzan K. DelBene
The Honorable Linda T. Sánchez
The Honorable Thomas R. Suozzi
The Honorable Judy Chu
The Honorable Gwen Moore
The Honorable Brendan F. Boyle
The Honorable Mike Kelly

² See <https://www.eipcard.com/support>; see also <https://www.eipcard.com/faq>.