



JEFFERSON COUNTY TREASURER

PO Box 571, Port Townsend WA 98368

Email: sprada@co.jefferson.wa.us Web: www.co.jefferson.wa.us

Stacie Prada – Treasurer (360) 385-9154

Janet A. Holbrook – Chief Deputy (360) 385-9151

Press Release

Stacie Prada, Jefferson County Treasurer

June 4, 2018

Warning: Tax Debt Scam Letters Received in Port Townsend

The Jefferson County Treasurer is warning people to be aware of a scam targeting individuals by mail. Two people have contacted the Jefferson County Treasurer stating they received letters notifying them of a State Tax Lien against them and that the State Taxing Authority may be prepared to garnish wages, freeze assets and bank accounts and/or seize any and/or all personal property to satisfy outstanding tax debt. These letters are not from the IRS, Jefferson County or Washington State, and no liens were recorded against these citizens.

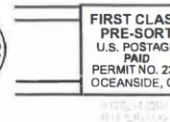
The letters do not provide any return address, and they only provide a phone number to call to pay them to help settle the debt. Be careful, and know that Washington State agencies and Jefferson County will always include their mailing address and phone number with any correspondence. Verify any contact information is correct to avoid falling victim to such scams.

Delinquent tax notices for Jefferson County property taxes were mailed on May 15, 2018. These statements include contact information for the Jefferson County Treasurer with mailing address, office address and phone number. If you're uncertain about property taxes owed, please contact the Jefferson County Treasurer at (360) 385-9150, or visit the office in the Jefferson County Courthouse between the hours of 8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

See below for an example of the scam letter:

Personal Financial & Tax Document
Immediate Attention Needed
Respond by date: 6/8/2018

**URGENT
NOTICE**



PO Box [REDACTED]
Port Townsend, WA 98368 [REDACTED]



Immediate Response Requested

INSTRUCTIONS: Do not forward unless the addressee has filed an author change of address notice (COA). If undeliverable, please handle in conformi with MAIL SECURITY regulations as outlined in Section No. 115 of the D

ADVERSE ACTIONS PENDING!

Nuestros agentes hablan español.

ID Number RDLF05252018		Lien Code State Tax Lien	
Lien Filed Against [REDACTED] PO Box [REDACTED] Port Townsend, WA 98368-[REDACTED]		Lien Filed In County of: Jefferson City of: Port Townsend State of: Washington	
Date Lien Filed 08/16/2016	Debt Amount \$7,724.00	Targeted Settlement Amount \$695.16	Lien Relief Department 800-489-5062
THIRD NOTICE	LIEN NOTICE	Tax Group Status <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	County Jefferson

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ID Number RDLF05252018		Lien Code State Tax Lien	
Lien Filed Against [REDACTED] PO Box [REDACTED] Port Townsend, WA 98368-[REDACTED]		Lien Filed In County of: Jefferson City of: Port Townsend State of: Washington	
Date Lien Filed 08/16/2016	Debt Amount \$7,724.00	Targeted Settlement Amount \$695.16	Lien Relief Department 800-489-5062
THIRD NOTICE	LIEN NOTICE	Tax Group Status <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	County Jefferson

Call Toll-Free 800-489-5062

Monday - Friday 6:00am - 6:00pm PST and Saturday 8am - 2pm PST

[REDACTED]

You are delinquent in paying your tax debt and a lien has been filed on 08/16/2016 in Jefferson County in the amount listed below. Your immediate response is requested to help us to help you satisfy this debt. Call us immediately at 800-489-5062 to potentially prevent property loss, a bank levy, wage garnishment or all of the above.



Bob Ferguson
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WASHINGTON

Consumer Protection Division
800 Fifth Avenue • Suite 2000 • MS TB 14 • Seattle WA 98104-3188
(206) 464-7745

June 6, 2018

Sent via Email

RE: Scam letter sent to Port Townsend residents (CCTN #299280)

Dear Stacie Prada:

Thank you for contacting the Washington State Attorney General's Office.

I have been asked to respond because I work in the Office's Consumer Protection Division. The primary function of the Consumer Protection Division is to foster a fair and non-deceptive marketplace, pursuant to the Consumer Protection Act, [RCW 19.86](#). This Division also provides information to the public regarding consumer issues and scams.

We are more than happy to keep a copy of this deceptive mailer on file. If more information is needed from you, we will contact you. Please feel free to share the below information with your constituents.

The situation you described fits the definition of a common type of scam called "Phishing". Phishers may contact consumers by email, telephone, letter, or facsimile. Often Phishers pretend to be from a legitimate company or will use official sounding names and will ask you to verify financial account information, passwords, or other personal information in order to access your account. Phishers also may threaten to terminate your account or in some cases even threaten to have you arrested unless you provide the requested information.

It is very difficult to locate Phishers because many of them operate out of foreign countries. We have found that the majority of these callers use various phone systems to bounce their calls to various locations within and outside the United States to disguise their actual phone number.

This in turn makes it very difficult to prosecute them and recover consumer funds. Given these difficulties, there is little our office can do to stop communications from Phishers. You may wish to contact the following agencies for assistance or guidance:

- Federal Trade Commission: Call toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or file a complaint online at: <http://ftc.gov/>
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service – Mail Fraud: Call 1-800-372-8347 or file a complaint online at: <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/contactUs/filecomplaint.aspx>
- Online fraud: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center, <http://www.ic3.gov>
- Phonebusters, the Canadian anti-fraud call center: <http://www.phonebusters.com> or call 888-495-8501

Our office offers the following tips if you receive any Phishing attempts:

- Be skeptical of warnings that accounts will be shut down with little or no notice if you don't reconfirm your billing information
- Don't click on website links in suspicious emails; contact the legitimate company directly using a telephone number or a website found on your statement or other correspondence

If you've given personal information, consider the following:

- Carefully check credit card and bank statements for unauthorized charges each month
- Contact the fraud departments of each credit bureau and report that sensitive financial information has been compromised; ask that a "fraud alert" be placed on your file
- If your financial accounts have been fraudulently accessed or opened, contact each company's security department; close these accounts; use creative passwords on your accounts
- If your financial information is used for illicit purposes, file a report with your local police or the police where the identity theft took place and get a copy of the report
- If you feel you are a victim of Identity Theft, visit the Washington State Attorney General's website at <http://www.atg.wa.gov/identity-theftprivacy> or contact the Federal Trade Commission by calling toll-free 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338) or visit their website at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/> for help

Our Office routinely shares our complaint databases with the Federal Trade Commission.

We hope this information is helpful. We will retain your correspondence as part of our public records.

Sincerely,

Chris Kiefer

Consumer Services Coordinator
 Consumer Protection Division
 Washington State Office of the Attorney General
 800 5th Ave Ste 2000
 Seattle, WA 98104
CPRcontact@atg.wa.gov