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January 26, 2017

Federal Trade Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Room CC-5610 (Annex C)  
Washington, DC 20580

**RE: Contact Lens Rule, 16 CFR Part 315, Project No. R511995**

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Citizen Outreach, a national non-profit grassroots advocacy organization supporting limited government and free-market economics, I'm writing in support of the FTC's proposal on the above-referenced rule regarding contact lenses.

The way consumers purchase a wide variety of products and services in the U.S. has changed dramatically over the last ten years. The overwhelming initial fear many had about providing their credit card information for online purchases has become all but an after-thought today.

Indeed, a quick Google search will turn up some very interesting items people can and do buy online today, including this 6,700-lb. JET 26x80 Geared Head Engine Lathe available from Amazon.com (*free shipping!*)...



On the opposite end of the spectrum there are an awful lot of unusual – indeed, outright weird – items available for Internet purchase, including these items discovered and outlined in an article by GoodHousekeeping.com: a popcorn-scented pillow, glow-in-the-dark toilet paper, Zombie Jerky, Unicorn Meat and bacon bandages.

So the notion that the online sale of a simple, ordinary consumer product such as contact lenses is inherently dangerous – as some optometrists who personally profit from such sales at their brick-and-mortar stores would have us believe - is absurd on its face.

These optometrists, faced with the same type of disruptive competition the taxicab industry has faced from Uber and Lyft and the hotel industry has faced from Airbnb, have been trying to protect their market share by abusing their privilege to issue prescriptions for contact lenses.

Some “bad actor” optometrists routinely try to make convenient online purchases of contact lenses inconvenient by failing to provide patients with a copy of their prescription as required by the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act (FCLCA). Or they “slow-walk” confirmation of such prescriptions when requested by online and retail competitors.

Under the circumstances and in light of this abuse of privilege, the proposed FTC rule requiring optometrists to obtain a signed statement from patients acknowledging they received a copy of their prescription and retain a copy of that acknowledgement for three years is neither unwarranted nor burdensome.

We also concur that the proposed rule changes by the FTC will “likely spur more competition and innovation among contact lens sellers and manufacturers.” That’s a good free-market approach and a good thing for consumers.

As such, we at Citizen Outreach urge the FTC to adopt and implement Contact Lens Rule, 16 CFR Part 315, Project No. R511995 as quickly as possible.

Respectfully yours,



Chuck Muth  
President