

Lawmaker wants to make phone book deliveries optional

They have long been a link to the world around us.

But while some people still use phonebooks as a directory, some people, said Rep. Paul Gardner, DFL-Shoreview, use them as a doorstop.

Like many of us, Gardner has stacks of old phone books, and now has a new bill in the Minnesota House that would let us say no to more. "You're getting three, four, or five of them, and people are saying, 'That's too much,'" Gardner said.

Gardner wants publishers to let us decide: To not get phonebooks if we don't want them, or request extra copies if we do.

A former recycling manager, he says thousands of books are thrown out and never used, adding to the 6 million tons of waste Minnesota has each year.

But the Yellow Pages Association says 85% of Americans used their print book last year, calling it a go-to resource and critical for small business ads.

"I still want a phonebook," Gardner said. "But I don't want five."

Gardner says despite the Internet, phonebooks are still useful, and that his opt-out plan won't kill the phonebook, just control it. "It gives people choice," Gardner said. "That's when it stops becoming an environmental issue and starts becoming a consumer issue."

Gardner plans to introduce his bill this session, but is also encouraging publishers to make the change themselves. Several have already agreed, and are now letting customers opt out.



By [Janel Klein](#), KARE 11 News