

Judicial Conference Approves Fee Increase

In September 2011, the Judicial Conference of the United States authorized an increase in the Judiciary's electronic public access fee in response to increasing costs for maintaining and enhancing the electronic public access system. The increase in the electronic public access (EPA) fee, from \$.08 to \$.10 per page, will take effect on April 1, 2012. The change is needed to continue to support and improve the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system, and to develop and implement the next generation of the Judiciary's Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system.

The EPA fee has not been increased since 2005. As mandated by Congress, the EPA program is funded entirely through user fees set by the Conference.

The Conference was mindful of the impact such an increase could have on other public entities and on public users accessing the system to obtain information on a particular case. For this reason, local, state, and federal government agencies will be exempted from the increase for three years. Moreover, PACER users who do not accrue charges of more than \$15 in a quarterly billing cycle would not be charged a fee. (The current exemption is \$10 per quarter.) The expanded exemption means that 75 to 80 percent of all users will still pay no fees.