

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2021

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

We are writing to express deep concern over the United States Postal Service's (USPS) planned facility consolidations under the Delivering for America plan. As you are aware, these 18 facilities that USPS has targeted for consolidation of mail processing operations were originally part of Phase 2 Network Rationalization Initiative (NRI) that was indefinitely paused in May 2015. We believe that at a minimum, these consolidations should be paused until further information about the justification and impact is made public.

Stakeholders have continuously raised concerns about some of the proposed changes under the Delivering for America plan, with the Postal Regulatory Commission writing in their July 20, 2021 advisory opinion that USPS hasn't provided evidence that customer satisfaction won't be adversely impacted by the changes and that the potential cost-savings that may be realized would not significantly impact the financial condition of the Postal Service.ⁱ In testimony before the Senate Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee on July 13, 2021, USPS OIG Tammy Whitcomb concurred that further analysis should be conducted before any restructuring under this plan moves forward.ⁱⁱ

It is our understanding that hundreds of mail handlers, clerks, and maintenance workers could be impacted by these consolidations, many of whom live close to their workplace and walk and bike to work. If consolidations require these employees to work at different facilities, they could face a significant increase in commute times and costs yet limited to no communication has been provided to them about any potential impact to their livelihoods. Consolidating operations from the Seattle East DDC to the Seattle P&DC could result in impacted employees having to commute through Seattle's significant traffic congestion. For other facilities like the Pocatello CSMPC, operations will be consolidated to the Salt Lake City P&DC which is in a different state and over 160 miles away.

We are worried that moving forward with facility consolidations during the ongoing public health emergency, which continues to impact staffing availability, would result in further service delays and erosion of public trust in one of our nation's most important institutions. Some reports have suggested that facility consolidations could begin as early as August 2021 and conclude by November 2021. If the proposed consolidations proceed on the originally stated timeline, we fear that similar to last year, they will interfere with the timely delivery of election mail in states that have vote-by-mail systems and further degrade mail service heading into the busy holiday season.

When USPS initially launched Phase 2 NRI, the process was conducted with far greater transparency, with USPS providing a publicly available, detailed spreadsheet that disclosed more than 10 data points, including the dates that mail and packages would be processed in the originating and activating plants. This time, USPS has provided only the list of facility changes.ⁱⁱⁱ

To date, we have not seen any documents detailing the analysis or rationale for resuming these facility consolidations. In particular, we are concerned that USPS is relying on Area Mail Processing (AMP) feasibility studies that may be close to a decade old. A 2015 OIG report noted that in April 2014 when the NRI was underway, 88 of the AMP studies contained data that was over 3 years old.^{iv} The OIG also noted that “over time, there is more likely to be changes in mail volume, labor rates, and labor hours that could impact an AMP’s projected cost savings” and when Phase 2 was indefinitely paused, the OIG expressed concern that were these consolidations to resume they would be based on “untimely data.” We echo these same concerns and do not believe it is appropriate for USPS to carry out their operational mail moves using data this old.

In March 2016, a bipartisan group of lawmakers expressed similar concerns about planned consolidations under the 2015 NRI.^v In response to their letter, on March 18, 2016, then Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman (who is now a member of the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service) wrote that “Prior to resumption of these [consolidation] activities, the Postal Service will update and review the Area Mail Processing feasibility studies using the most recent available data.”^{vi} We look forward to seeing the Postal Service uphold that commitment.

We respectfully request your response to the following questions:

- Will USPS abide by its March 18, 2016, commitment to update the AMP feasibility studies with the most recent available data before proceeding with these consolidations?
- What analysis and impact studies has USPS conducted that led to the announcement earlier this year to consolidate these facilities, and when were these studies conducted?
- What impact will the mail moves at each of these 18 facilities have on the timely delivery of mail?
- On what date are consolidation activities slated to commence and end at each of the facilities?
- What will happen to the employees at each of these facilities and when will they be made aware?
- Does USPS plan to expand the list of facilities beyond the 18 that were announced in May 2021, and if yes, how and when will that determination be made?
- Please provide the following categories of information for each of the impacted 18 facilities, in accordance with the level of detail provided during Phase 2 NRI:
 - The first date that all originating letter mail, flat mail, and packages will be processed in the activating plant
 - The first date that all destinating letter mail, flat mail, and packages will be processed in the activating plant
 - The first date that all delivery point processing letter mail and flat mail will be processed in the activating plant
 - The date when redirections will begin
 - The change date and new location where parcel return service will be available for pickup if applicable for the facility

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. We look forward to receiving your response by October 15, 2021.


Sincerely,



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Michael K. Simpson
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



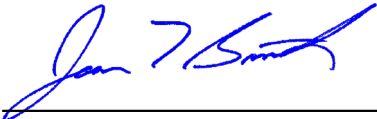
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



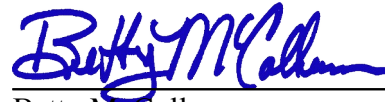
Jason Smith
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



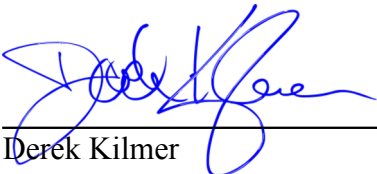
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



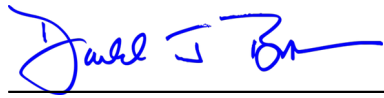
Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



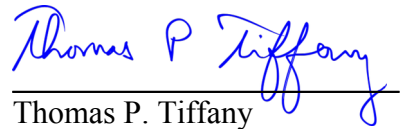
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Thomas P. Tiffany
Member of Congress



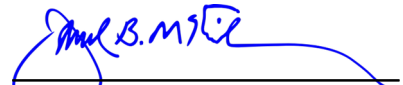
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



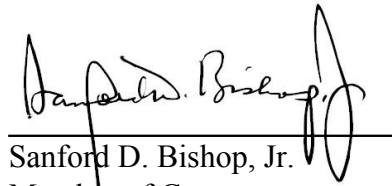
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



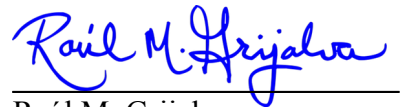
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Terrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



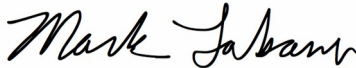
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



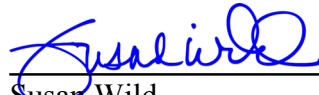
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Ann Kirkpatrick
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David J. Trone
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Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



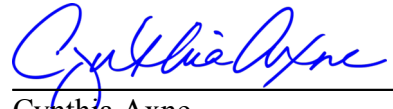
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Cynthia Axne
Member of Congress

ⁱ <https://www.prc.gov/press-releases/prc-issues-advisory-opinion-postal-service-plan-implement-service-standards-changes>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-hearing-to-review-the-fy-2022-budget-request-for-the-usps-office-of-inspector-general-and-usps-service-issues->

ⁱⁱⁱ https://about.usps.com/what/strategic-plans/delivering-for-america/assets/USPS_MailMoves_FacilityList.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2015/no-ar-15-007.pdf>

^v <http://www.postal-reporter.com/blog/bipartisan-group-of-33-lawmakers-call-on-usps-for-updated-plant-consolidation-plans/>

^{vi} https://delbene.house.gov/uploadedfiles/usps_responds_to_u.s._rep._mcsally_letter_2016.pdf