

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2006

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) recently began to study selected postal processing plants and make recommendations to consolidate these plants and their operations. While we recognize that USPS may need to consolidate its facilities because it has excess capacity due to changes in the types of mail being processed and improvements in automation, we have some concerns about the way in which USPS is carrying out this realignment.

Specifically, we are not convinced that USPS is following the recommendations made in GAO's 2005 report, U.S. Postal Service: The Service's Strategy for Realigning its Mail Processing Infrastructure Lacks Clarity, Criteria, and Accountability. This GAO report recommended that the Service establish criteria, inform stakeholders as decisions are made, and evaluate and measure the outcomes of realigning these plants including the costs and savings that result. Although GAO recommended that USPS increase its efforts to keep stakeholders informed, members of the House and Senate have informed our Committees that they and the communities they represent have not been adequately informed about the Postal Service's plans, how the Postal Service proposed to analyze plant performance and make realignment decisions, and what are the potential effects on these communities.

Therefore, we are asking that GAO follow up on its report and determine:

- What criteria is USPS using to analyze and evaluate these plants?
- How does it plan to communicate these criteria to affected parties?
- How does USPS's overall communication strategy target the appropriate affected parties and does it provide sufficient information throughout the process? and
- How does USPS plan to measure the effects of realignment including costs incurred and savings realized?

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Please work with Jack Callender, Ann Fisher, Denise Wilson, and Larry Novey of our staffs as you develop and complete this work.

Sincerely,



Tom Davis
Chairman
House Committee on Government
Reform



Susan M. Collins
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland
Security and Governmental Affairs



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Government
Reform



Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland
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