



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

September 15, 2006

William Burrus
President
(202) 842-4246

Honorable Susan Collins
SD-461 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

As employees of the United States Postal Service, APWU members are proud of our contribution to the best mail service in the world. For more than 200 years we have served the communications needs of our country and have played a significant role in the phenomenal growth of the mailing industry, which currently accounts for 10 percent of our nation's gross domestic product.

National Executive Board

William Burrus
President

Cliff "C.J." Guffey
Executive Vice President

Terry R. Stapleton
Secretary-Treasurer

Greg Bell
Industrial Relations Director

James "Jim" McCarthy
Director, Clerk Division

Steven G. "Steve" Raymer
Director, Maintenance Division

Robert C. "Bob" Pritchard
Director, MVS Division

However, the Postal Service is now undertaking a major restructuring of the postal processing network that makes it possible to deliver mail to every address, six days per week. Our union has challenged many of the proposed "consolidations" because the Postal Service has failed to consider the concerns of the American people, denied them the information necessary to determine if the revised network will meet their needs, and excluded them from having real input in the decision-making process.

We understand and support efforts to make the Postal Service as efficient and cost effective as possible, and join with other interested parties in support of such goals. We do not, however, support the exclusion of ordinary citizens from the debate. Input from individuals and small businesses is especially important in view of the fact that special interests in the "mailing industry" have clamored for the contemplated changes in order to improve their own bottom line; we believe the changes would be at the expense of service to small businesses and individual customers.

Many U.S. Senators and Representatives have expressed concern about the program in letters to the Government Accountability Office: In a May 1, 2006, letter, 19 Members of Congress told U.S. Comptroller General David M. Walker:

"Although GAO recommended that USPS improve its efforts to keep stakeholders informed, our communities affected by current plans to consolidate mail processing plants have told us that they have not been adequately informed about the Postal Service's plans, the extent to which the Postal Service proposed to analyze plant performance and make realignment decisions, or the potential impacts on these communities."

Regional Coordinators

Sharyn M. Stone
Central Region

Jim Burke
Eastern Region

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell
Northeast Region

Frankie Sanders
Southern Region

Omar M. Gonzalez
Western Region

Regional Coordinators

Sharyn M. Stone
Central Region

Jim Burke
Eastern Region

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell
Northeast Region

Frankie Sanders
Southern Region

Omar M. Gonzalez
Western Region

September 15, 2006

Page Two

In a March 27, 2006, letter, four Members of Congress who serve on committees with oversight over the Postal Service wrote, "While we recognize the USPS may need to consolidate its facilities... we are not convinced that USPS is following the recommendations made" in GAO's 2005 report titled, *U.S. Postal Service: The Service's Strategy for Realigning its Mail Processing Infrastructure Lacks Clarity, Criteria, and Accountability*.

The legislators' letter noted that, "The 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."

The intent of Congress in the enactment of Public Law 91-375 in 1970 is clear:

The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution created by Act of Congress, and supported by the people. The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities. The costs of establishing and maintaining the Postal Service shall not be apportioned to impair the overall value of such service to the people. (Section 101, Postal Policy)

Those that support USPS efforts to realign the processing network without public input have chosen to ignore the intent of Congress. Their disdain for the needs and wishes of ordinary citizens – your constituents – is evident in a recent editorial in the newsletter of the Mailing & Fulfillment Service Association, an association of large mailers:

But this is the Postal Service, about which everyone who's not accountable for it still claims the right to a piece of deciding how it should be run, as if its "public service" status means all Americans get to put in their two-cents worth equally with the PMG. (Postal Points, Aug. 25, 2006, Issue #06-12)

The United States Postal Service is an American treasure that has served our country and its citizenry well. Postal employees welcome all efforts to make our service more efficient and cost effective, including the redesign of the processing network, consistent with the USPS obligation to serve the American people. We do not believe that the American public should be excluded from the decision-making process. Democracy at its best requires the inclusion of those governed.

Thank you for your service to the citizens you represent. They are deserving of a first-class postal system, and we trust that you will support their right to be heard.

Sincerely,



William Burrus
President