



Seattle City Council

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 6, 2015

Re: Supporting Legislation to Reform the United States Postal Service

Dear Senator Cantwell:

I am writing to you in support of postal-reform legislation that would (1) stabilize Postal Service finances by reforming or eliminating the unique requirement of pre-funding future retiree health benefits; (2) secure the continuation of six-day mail delivery; (3) retain door-to-door service for over 30 million households and businesses; and (4) restore service standards that would provide for next-day delivery of local first-class mail.

The United States Postal Service provides vital services to the City of Seattle, the State of Washington, and our nation as a whole. It is a critical component of this country's economic and communications infrastructure, handling and delivering 160 billion pieces of mail and generating more than \$65 billion in revenue annually. It performs this service with no taxpayer funding.

The U.S. Postal Service is currently burdened with a requirement to pre-fund retiree health premiums for 75 years into the future within a 10-year period, a requirement no other federal agency or private company must meet, resulting in a \$5.5 billion annual payment.

While the last two years of postal financial reports have shown operational profits, increasing revenue and an increasing cash balance, these positive results have been overshadowed by the artificial losses caused by the pre-funding requirement. Paper losses have motivated the push for service cuts that are both unnecessary and detrimental to long-term postal financial health. Removing this pre-payment requirement would help the overall fiscal health of the U.S. Postal Service.

In addition, I would ask you to support legislation that would preserve six-day, door-to-door mail delivery, retain door-to-door service, and restore service standards that provide for overnight delivery of first-class mail.

On January 5, 2015, with little notice to the public or opportunity for comment, the Postal Service changed its service standards for first-class mail, thereby eliminating overnight delivery of local mail. This action is damaging to businesses that rely on prompt delivery of bills, payments, and merchandise orders. It will also delay the results of mail ballot elections, or result in voter disenfranchisement if the state should require ballots to be returned by Election Day.

Seattle depends on the Postal Service's mail processing, retail service and delivery networks six days a week. Municipalities that vote almost entirely by mail, such as Seattle, are especially dependent on full and reliable mail service for timely exercise of their voting franchise. Many Americans, particularly senior citizens also rely on the Postal Service for prompt receipt of their prescription drugs.

In Seattle, the Postal Service provides approximately 4,000 jobs at living wages, comprising an important part of our local economy in the Puget Sound Region. If no legislative action is taken to restore service standards, mail sorting operations in Redmond, Tacoma, and Wenatchee will be closed this year, impacting over three hundred jobs, and making it more difficult to return to previous delivery schedules.

I urge you to support legislation that guarantees the Postal Services' financial stability and ability to provide this essential service to Seattle residents. I look forward to hearing from you about this important matter.

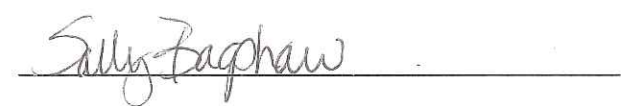
Sincerely,



Edward B. Murray, Mayor



Council President Tim Burgess



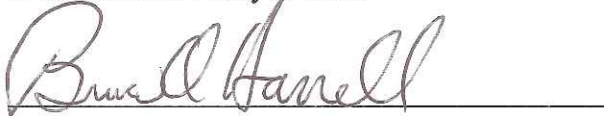
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw



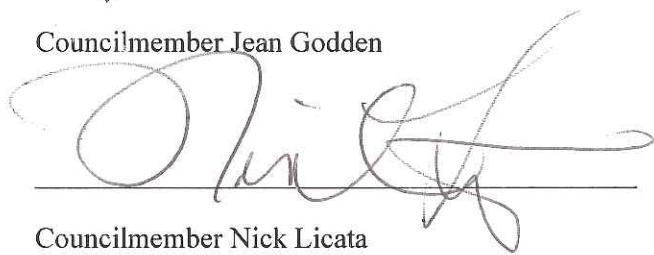
Councilmember Sally I. Clark



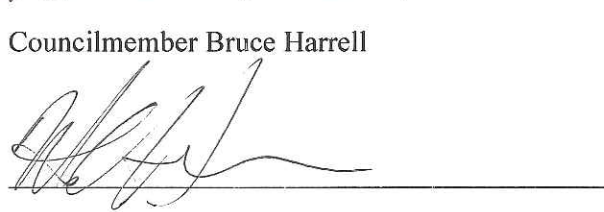
Councilmember Jean Godden



Councilmember Bruce Harrell



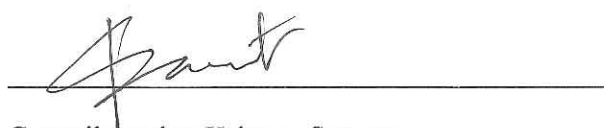
Councilmember Nick Licata



Councilmember Mike O'Brien



Councilmember Tom Rasmussen



Councilmember Kshama Sawant