

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2024

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

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

We are writing in strong opposition to the consolidation and review announcements recently made throughout the country by the United States Postal Service (USPS).

A common theme of these announcements is the so-called “modernization” of Processing and Distribution Centers (P&DCs) into Local Processing Centers (LPCs). Taken together, these proposals dismantle parts of the Postal Service’s robust network that helps distribute mail across the country and places outgoing sorting into more distant facilities. The result of this change is that mail will need to travel farther from its origin to its sorting, creating inefficiencies in the system, especially for local mail. Additionally, some of the proposed improvements described as modernization include deferred maintenance for these facilities, which the Postal Service should have already completed.

We hear frequently from our constituents about deteriorating mail delivery. Customers rely on the Postal Service for a variety of important services, including their medication, newspapers, and financial documents. Sending mail farther for sorting is unlikely to improve service. The Postal Service has stated that mail will continue to meet service delivery standards. However, according to the Postal Service, revisions made in 2021 to these delivery standards “will increase time-in-transit standards by 1 or 2 days for certain mail that is traveling longer distances.” For affected communities, the mail will certainly be traveling longer distances, leading to longer processing times.

The announced network changes align with the Postal Service’s Delivering for America (DFA) plan. However, a recent review by the USPS Office of Inspector General of the implementation of the new Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RP&DC) in Richmond, Virginia, raises alarms. That facility was the first to be converted to an RP&DC as a result of the DFA plan. The Inspector General’s review noted that challenges associated with changes to the facility “contributed to a decrease in service performance for the Richmond region that continued four months after launch.” This report should have given pause and caused a review of the plan. However, less than two weeks after the release of this report, the Postal Service announced additional facility conversions, including the downgrades of the Eastern Maine P&DC and the Charleston, West Virginia P&DC – that state’s only remaining full-service facility – to LPCs. Additionally, despite community opposition, the Postal Service is moving forward with downgrades to facilities in Arkansas, Delaware, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oregon, and

Tennessee, while being on track to make the same decision in Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, and Vermont, and pushing ongoing changes to the Atlanta RP&DC.

These consolidation proposals never have had any discernible support from local communities. On the contrary, we have heard strong opposition to these efforts from USPS customers, community leaders, local businesses, and postal employees. Rather than marching forward with these plans and offering short and vague statements dismissing concerns, the Postal Service should be communicating why the organization believes these changes are beneficial and what the specific impact of the changes will be to mail service.

We understand the Postmaster General stresses the need to restore the Postal Service to solid financial footing, but we disagree with the proposed changes to postal facilities, particularly given the increased transportation and labor costs associated with implementation of the RP&DC, as described by the IG report. We are skeptical that the DFA plan will successfully accomplish its described goals. It is undisputed that the Postal Service faces a number of challenges in its efforts to provide universal mail delivery service, including workforce challenges, long distances, declining mail volume, and competition in certain markets. However, the proposed network redesign creates a new set of challenges for the Postal Service and is shattering customer confidence in the USPS.

The Postal Service provides an essential service upon which our constituents rely. The robust nature of the Postal Service's current network is its strength, not its weakness. To ensure that our constituents continue to receive reliable service, we urge you to reconsider these consolidation announcements.

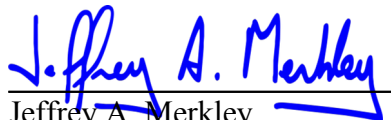
Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



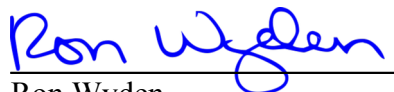
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



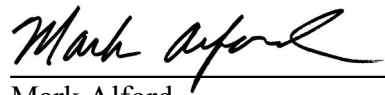
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United States Senator



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Member of Congress



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Mark Alford
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Steve Womack
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



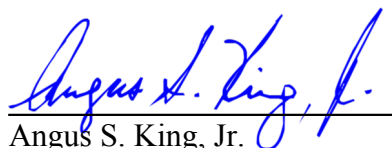
Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress



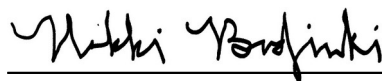
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



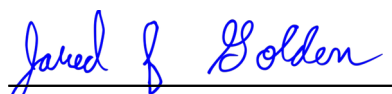
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Peter Welch
United States Senator



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress