

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 20, 2021

Chairman Ron Bloom  
Board of Governors  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington, DC 20260

Mr. Louis DeJoy  
Postmaster General  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Chairman Bloom and Postmaster General DeJoy:

We write today to express our strong concerns with your decision to move forward with service standard changes associated with First-Class Mail and Periodicals. These changes will slow down mail service for millions of Americans and risk further undermining the competitive position of the Postal Service. As an essential public service, the Postal Service must take actions to promote its long-term solvency and uphold service performance—a core tenet of the Postal Service. Before the Postal Service proceeds with your planned changes, the American people deserve to know whether your agency took the proper steps to analyze and understand the ramifications of these actions.

On March 23, 2021, you released “Delivering for America,” a 10-year plan to modernize the Postal Service and develop a path to financial stability.<sup>1</sup> In that plan, you outlined a series of efforts to address the Postal Service’s financial difficulties, including an announcement that you would “modify existing service standards for First-Class Mail Letters and Flats from a current 1- to 3-day service standard within the continental United States to a one-to-five-day service standard.”<sup>2</sup> You stated that “70 percent of First-Class Mail volume would receive a standard of one to three days,” while First-Class 3-day volume will be subject to a 3-, 4-, or 5-day service standard, depending on the distance.” Following a year of serious setbacks for the Postal

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<sup>1</sup> *United States Postal Service Unveils 10-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence*, United States Postal Service (March 23, 2021) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2021/0323-usps-unveils-10-year-plan-to-achieve-financial-sustainability-and-service-excellence.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> *Delivering for America*, United States Postal Service (March 23, 2021) (Online at [https://about.usps.com/what/strategic-plans/delivering-for-america/assets/USPS\\_Delivering-For-America.pdf](https://about.usps.com/what/strategic-plans/delivering-for-america/assets/USPS_Delivering-For-America.pdf))

Service—largely driven by the disruptive operational changes you enacted in the midst of a global pandemic<sup>3</sup>—your decision to further slow the delivery of mail poses yet another threat to this vital institution. Your decision must also be considered in the context of the sizeable mid-year rate increases recently announced by the Postal Service. We are concerned that, taken together, the decisions both to slow mail delivery and increase rates will have a significant adverse effect on the volume of first-class mail and periodicals.

On July 20, 2021, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) issued an opinion raising grave doubts about whether these changes will allow the Postal Service to uphold its commitment to providing reliable mail service. The PRC questioned the Postal Service’s analysis that the proposed changes would not affect mail volume, finding that “the Postal Service cannot conclude with any statistical confidence the impact to First-Class Mail and Periodicals mail volume as a result of an increase in days to delivery.” In particular, the PRC expressed concern “that the Postal Service has not conducted operational or pilot testing of the proposed service standards,” and “that the Postal Service has not fully modeled these changes and has yet to monitor, evaluate, and assess these new service standards in the field.”<sup>4</sup>

The PRC concluded that although the stated goal of your 10-year plan is to provide a pathway to financial solvency, “it is not clear that the tradeoff between financial viability and maintaining high-quality service standards is reasonable.” Accordingly, the PRC found, “the amount of estimated annual cost savings, even if fully realized, does not indicate much improvement, if any, to the Postal Service’s current financial condition.”<sup>5</sup>

Not only are these statements concerning in their own right, but they echo an assessment by the Postal Service Inspector General about the disastrous changes you implemented last summer that resulted in significant mail disruptions throughout the fall and winter. The Inspector General determined that “no analysis of the service impacts of these various changes was conducted” prior to their implementation.<sup>6</sup>

The Postal Service is required by law to provide “prompt, reliable, and efficient services,” and millions of Americans rely upon the agency to do just that.<sup>7</sup> The PRC’s findings suggest that the Postal Service’s justification for the proposed changes “relies upon assumptions

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the Inspector General, United States Postal Service, *Operational Changes to Mail Delivery* (Oct. 19, 2020) (online at [www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2020/20-292-R21.pdf](http://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2020/20-292-R21.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> Postal Regulatory Commission, *Advisory Opinion on Service Changes Associated with First-Class Mail and Periodicals* (July 20, 2021) (online at [www.prc.gov/docs/119/119311/Docket%20No.%20N2021-1\\_Advisory%20Opinion.pdf](http://www.prc.gov/docs/119/119311/Docket%20No.%20N2021-1_Advisory%20Opinion.pdf)).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Office of the Inspector General, United States Postal Service, *Operational Changes to Mail Delivery* (Oct. 19, 2020) (online at [www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2020/20-292-R21.pdf](http://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2020/20-292-R21.pdf)).

<sup>7</sup> 39 U.S.C. § 101.

that may not be well founded” and may make the Postal Service “unable to achieve successful implementation where reliability and efficiency are required.”<sup>8</sup>

It is imperative that the Postal Service takes all steps necessary to fully understand the potentially damaging ramifications of slowing mail delivery. Unfortunately, it appears that the Postal Service have conducted no such comprehensive analysis.

Therefore, we request that you respond to the following questions by September 30, 2021:

1. How do you respond to their PRC’s assertions in its advisory opinion that these changes appear to be rushed and at odds with the very mission of the “Delivering for America” plan?
2. Will you factor in the PRC’s opinion—or input from the public—before proceeding with the final implementation of these changes? If so, how? If not, what is your rationale for ignoring their feedback?
3. Did you seek input from relevant stakeholders—including unions and industry partners—before pursuing these changes? Did you incorporate any of their feedback? If not, why not?
4. According to the plan, the change in service standards is driven largely by a significant reduction in the use of air transport in favor of surface transportation. Please provide documents sufficient to show whether the surface transportation network is capable of accommodating the increase this shift will cause.

For more than two centuries, the public has counted on the Postal Service to deliver mail in a reliable and timely manner. The Postal Service is not an ordinary business, but an indispensable public service recognized by the Constitution as vital to the American people and to our democracy. As Postmaster General, it is your responsibility to fully consider the impact of your decision to modify service standards before it is implemented. We look forward to your responses to our inquiry.

Sincerely,



Brenda L. Lawrence  
Committee Member

Committee on Oversight and Reform



Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman

Committee on Oversight and Reform

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<sup>8</sup> Postal Regulatory Commission, *Advisory Opinion on Service Changes Associated with First-Class Mail and Periodicals* (July 20, 2021) (online at [https://www.prc.gov/docs/119/119311/Docket%20No.%20N2021-1\\_Advisory%20Opinion.pdf](https://www.prc.gov/docs/119/119311/Docket%20No.%20N2021-1_Advisory%20Opinion.pdf)).



Gerald E. Connolly  
Committee Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Stephen F. Lynch  
Committee Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

cc: Board Members

The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member