

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Patrick R. Donahoe  
Postmaster General, CEO  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

We write you today regarding the Postal Service's ongoing efforts to evaluate its retail operation network. Specifically, we wanted to draw your attention to a request for information that we have each extended to you over the past several months. To date, we have not received a response from you or your staff on this matter.

In the May 17<sup>th</sup> hearing held by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC) titled "Addressing the U.S. Postal Service's Financial Crisis," you had the following exchange in regards to the extent that public comment affects Postal Service retail operation considerations:

Senator Pryor: "When you say you're listening, that you want to hear from the people...how many facilities have been on the list for closure, and then you went through the public comment process and you decided not to close them?"

Postmaster General Donahoe: "I'll have to get back to you. I'd be more than happy to do that."

However, nearly four months later, you had still not provided a response to this question.

In the September 6<sup>th</sup> HSGAC hearing on the Postal Service's financial situation, titled "U.S. Postal Service in Crisis: Proposals to Prevent a Postal Shutdown," a similar line of questioning was pursued:

Senator McCaskill: "I'm most worried about the transparency of the process. And last time that you testified before us, Sen. Pryor asked a question which, to my knowledge, has not been fully answered. Have there been times that places have been removed from the list following public hearings and comment? Has the public hearing and comment process ever had any impact on the decisions, the initial decisions to close?"

Postmaster General Donahoe: "I would have to double-check on that but I'm sure that there have been cases, but I'll double check and get back to you."

Senator McCaskill: "If you would, get back to us on that. I want to make sure that this isn't just a 'dog-and-pony show' for these folks. Some of their hearts are

breaking over this. Their post offices are going away. I want to make sure this process is fair and transparent.”

In fact, each of us has issued similar questions to you, either in personal meetings or in a Senate hearing.

Today, a full month after again committing to address this question, we have yet to receive a detailed response. We find this lack of transparency on your part to be the source of great concern. As Postmaster General, one of your primary responsibilities is to provide timely information, particularly when questions are posed to you in a Congressional hearing. We are tasked with representing our constituents and asking questions on their behalf. Since there are 600 facilities being considered for closure or consolidation in our six states alone, this is an issue of extreme importance in communities we represent.

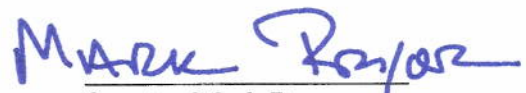
Over the course of multiple conversations with you, both in Congressional hearings and in face-to-face interactions, we have gained a deep understanding and appreciation of the difficult financial situation that the Postal Service is facing. We fully acknowledge that, in order to preserve the core mission of the entity, tough decisions must continue to be made that affect every aspect of the Postal Service.

The lack of response leads many of our constituents to question if their views and concerns are truly taken into account during this process. The public comment process should provide more than the opportunity for input; it must lead to a full and fair consideration, with the real potential that positive outcomes can arise from the process. Anything less would confirm our constituents concerns.


Our primary interest in this matter remains the same: to help the residents of potentially-affected communities understand your agency’s decision-making process and to ensure that these residents are provided with the opportunity to share valuable information that may help facilitate this process. To that end, we respectfully urge you to provide a prompt response.

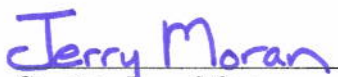
Sincerely,

  
Senator Claire McCaskill

  
Senator Mark Pryor

  
Senator Mark Begich

  
Senator Jon Tester

  
Senator Jerry Moran

  
Senator Susan Collins