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United States Senate

July 18, 2011

Patrick Donahoe
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service
458 L'Enfant Plaza Southwest
Washington D.C., DC 20024-2114

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe:

I write to reiterate my concerns that were covered in our discussion on June 28 in my office. Montanans and rural Americans rely upon the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) more significantly than folks in urban and suburban areas. Rural communities, individuals and small business owners need fast and reliable service to maintain their way of life through access to necessary medicines, equipment, correspondence and paychecks.

As a family farmer, I understand the financial realities of making ends meet—and what a thankless job you have trying to do so. I remain willing to work with you to address the financial bind created by the 2006 law requiring you to prefund the retiree health benefits. Restoring fiscal stability to the USPS will enable more flexibility to assure continued, reliable mail delivery to all Americans. However, it is critically important to the folks living in rural Montana that six day delivery is maintained.

Along those lines, I commend your goal of proposing system savings that would have a minimal impact on customer service. However, because of the rural nature of Montana, these types of changes have a larger impact than they would in a suburban or urban area. Therefore I'd like you to address my concerns before proceeding with closing small post offices and delivery unit optimization.

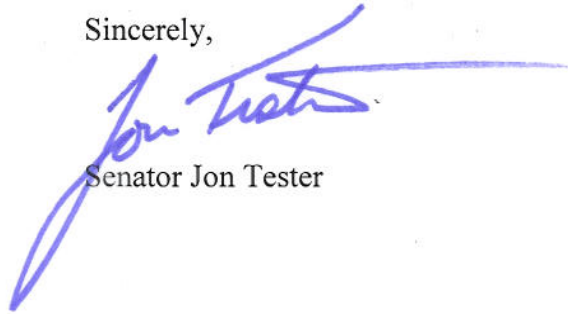
Montana is a net recipient of mail, and thus evaluating usefulness based upon revenue doesn't reflect the value of a post office to the community. I request that in each instance where you consider closing a small post office that you simultaneously evaluate continuing retail access options at another location in the same town. Prior to any final closure decisions, I expect that you will provide detailed analysis of the projected financial and service operation benefits of these proposed changes and that co-location options be a factor in the final determinations.

I also have a concern with your recently proposed delivery unit optimization. While I applaud the cost-savings measure, I request that you ensure that customers who have non-delivered items or packages will be able to pick up those items at their mailing address post

office, not at the post office where the delivery originated. This will save your customers from the increased hardship and burden of driving between 14 and 36 miles to pick up mail requiring signatures.

I look forward to continuing our conversations to improve transparency at the USPS and to ensure that Montana-specific decisions are justified by the data provided. Thank you again for your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Jon Tester