

# United States Senate

July 18, 2024

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

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

I write today to express my concerns about the sudden decision to end air service for priority and express mail in Montana. At a time when Montanans are already reporting unacceptably inconsistent delivery from the USPS, cutting air transportation will further degrade mail service in our rural state. Once again, it appears that the USPS is turning its back on rural America and attempting to solve its budget woes on the backs of our nation's rural citizens.

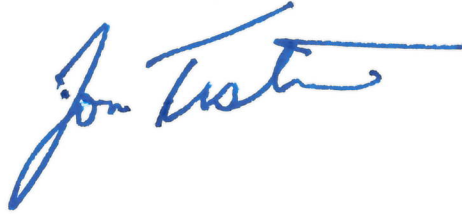
As a large and rural state with hundreds of miles between urban areas, air mail delivery by air service is critical for allowing fast delivery of essential documents, prescriptions, and goods. This is especially true during the winter where extreme weather can often make long stretches of road unsafe or even impassable. Decades ago, USPS rightfully realized these challenges and developed a successful air service system to ensure Montanans can experience similar delivery standards as citizens in urban areas. This was the right thing to do.

I am deeply troubled that the USPS appears to be reversing course on this commitment to rural America. Moreover, I cannot overstate the frustration of Montanans that this decision appears to have been made without any public input or significant advanced notice. I understand that the USPS gave its long-time contracted air service provider, Alpine Air, just one week's notice that their contract with USPS would not be extended and air service across Montana would be terminated.

Alpine Air has partnered with USPS for over 30 years and employs 20 Montanans who work as pilots, mechanics, and support staff who have been critical in getting folks their mail quickly. The sudden decision to end their contract jeopardizes the future of the company and their employees and does not give them sufficient time to plan any major transition. In addition, the apparent hastiness of this decision raises obvious questions about how USPS could possibly have the staff and equipment necessary to transition to a ground-based approach on such a short timeline.

With all of this in mind, I urge the USPS to immediately take steps to continue air service in Montana and reengage in any necessary contract negotiations. Mail service is critically important to rural America and any action that threatens reliability or degrades rural service standards is unacceptable. I will always fight to defend mail service in Montana and I stand ready to convey the negative impact terminating air service would have on our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.