United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 9, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
S-146A Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Inouye, and Ranking Member Cochran:

Everyone understands that the United States Postal Service (USPS) is experiencing significant financial problems today and that changes need to be made as the USPS adjusts to a digital world.

To address this serious problem, Congress is in the midst of significantly reforming the postal service. Several bills have been introduced in the Senate and the House on this issue. On November 9th, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee passed the 21st Century Postal Service Act, S.1789, by a vote of 9-1. The House is also moving forward with postal reform legislation.

While we may have very different views on how to financially improve the postal service, we all believe that democratically elected members of the Senate and the House have the responsibility to make significant changes to the postal service.

Unfortunately, we are concerned that the postal service may preempt Congress on this matter by closing or consolidating nearly 3,700 mostly rural post offices, over 250 mail processing facilities, and eliminating overnight delivery for first class mail before postal reform legislation is enacted. While some of these changes may be needed, we believe that it is very important to give Congress the opportunity to reform the postal service in a way that protects universal service while ensuring its financial viability for decades to come.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you include language in the next appropriations bill to prevent the USPS from closing or consolidating area mail processing facilities or rural

post offices for the next six months. This six month moratorium will give Congress the time needed to enact reforms necessary for the postal service to succeed in the 21st century.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Mary Landrieu
United States Senator

Mark Begich
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator

Ben Nelson
United States Senator

Tim Johnson
United States Senator

Mark Udall
United States Senator

Michael Bennet
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Max Baucus
United States Senator

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Tom Udall

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