

United States Senate

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October 18, 2022

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

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

Earlier this year, I wrote to you about the widespread delays in mail delivery in the State of Maine. There continue to be numerous cases in Maine where the United States Postal Service (USPS) is having difficulty in meeting its mission to provide the nation with reliable, affordable, and universal mail service. These persistent problems must be addressed.

In January, USPS's Director of Government Relations Scott Slusher wrote on your behalf that delays were related to winter weather, the COVID-19 pandemic, and fewer applicants applying for jobs within the Postal Service. According to many of my constituents, problems have continued throughout the year. Since I received that reply, federal government pandemic-related restrictions have eased and now are not overly burdensome. Staff recruitment is an economic challenge facing both private and public sector employers, and the USPS should be at the forefront of addressing workforce shortages.

Living in a rural state, Mainers depend on USPS for many of their basic necessities and to conduct business. Many of my constituents have reported that PO Boxes are unavailable to customers due to post office closures, a situation that can quickly become dire for those who depend on PO Box access to receive their medication deliveries. In some instances, USPS does not offer home delivery, so PO Box delivery is the only option. In another example, a business owner shared with me that his local post office is failing to meet posted hours without explanation. He is also seeing mail returned despite addresses being ones to which he has shipped product on multiple prior occasions. My staff submits cases like these on a near-daily basis to the casework portal established by USPS.

If operations improve in one area, I soon hear about deteriorations in another. It is particularly frustrating that the general public, USPS business partners, and even congressional offices are left with little information or notice about these service changes. The problems are frequently blamed on "staffing shortages," but there has been no guidance as to what USPS is doing to address the matter – which has been a problem for an extended period of time. The bottom line is that basic services are not being met.

To better address the frequent concerns of my constituents, I am requesting answers to the following questions:

1. When does USPS expect to have the staff levels needed, either permanent or temporary, to meet its service obligations throughout Maine?
2. The ten-year plan includes employee retention goals, such as reducing non-career workforce turnover by 50 percent. What measures are being taken to implement this plan?
3. My constituents have informed me of many instances in which USPS has failed to provide deliveries over the course of several consecutive days. Just recently, I have been told that some constituents have gone 5 days without mail delivery in Greene, Maine. This is not unusual. When a postal route has been curtailed, what steps are taken to ensure that no individual route is affected on consecutive days?
4. As a customer-oriented institution, USPS should be able to provide customers with up-to-date information about Post Office hours of service, closures, and route changes. How can a postal customer best receive updates on facilities that are not open during their posted hours and routes that are not serviced?
5. There are cases where because of unscheduled post office closures, your customers lack access to their PO Boxes, despite the understanding that the location will be open during regular business hours. As mentioned earlier, these deliveries can include medications and in some locations in Maine, a PO Box is the only option available to receive mail delivery. Many post offices across the country allow 24/7 access to PO Boxes, which often does not require staffing to keep the PO Box-area of the facility open. In places where there is no 24/7 facility and the USPS has restricted access during regular business hours, what measures are being taken to provide access to PO Boxes?
6. As recommendations provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for best practices in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic have changed, has the USPS adjusted its operational procedures? When did USPS last update its COVID-19 protocols?

I look forward to hearing from you about these important issues.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator