

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2005

The Honorable John E. Potter  
Postmaster General  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.  
Washington, DC 20260-0001

Dear Postmaster Potter:

On Wednesday, November 9, 2005, our offices met with USPS Government Relations representatives to discuss USPS's recent decision to consolidate outgoing mail processing operations at the Olympia Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) with the Tacoma P&DC. The nature of this meeting was for information gathering only. As a result of that meeting, we believe that it is in the best interest of our region to receive formal clarification of some outstanding concerns as well as to reemphasize our position on the proposed consolidation. We would like to take this opportunity to address these with you.

Our first concern is one of a procedural nature. We are disappointed that USPS did not provide us with a briefing, or at very least, the content of the Area Mail Processing (AMP) study, prior to issuance of the press release announcing USPS's formal plans to move forward with consolidation of the Olympia plant, despite our request for this information in September. We have also received numerous calls from concerned postal workers who have indicated that a local newspaper article which ran the day after the USPS press release was issued was the first they had heard about plans to move forward with the consolidation. This is simply unacceptable. This behavior only serves to undermine USPS's proposal and places workers, their families, and the community in a precarious position. We urge you to work to rectify this oversight in your communication with our offices and with affected USPS workers in the future.

Secondly, USPS officials attempted to clarify in the November meeting that the removal of the Olympia postmark would be replaced with an "Olympia-Tacoma" postmark for approximately 25% of the mail coming out of Olympia, and that mail processed in the State Capitol would retain its Olympia postmark because it has its own meter. As relayed in the meeting with USPS officials, we oppose the removal of the Olympia postmark. However, in an effort to better understand the position of USPS, please provide us with an explanation as to how the State Capitol and City of Olympia may continue to use their Olympia postmark as well as explain any transfer of cost in doing so. Also, please clarify which mail pieces would potentially receive an "Olympia-Tacoma" postmark and how you plan on implementing a hybrid postmark that does not currently exist.

Thirdly, in the Executive Summary Brief, you mention that the Olympia plant works with CMS in the “processing and distribution of the State volumes around the clock.” You also state that, “Adjustments to current receipt and clearance times of State agency mail would be necessary in order to provide the Tacoma P&DC the mail flow necessary to give them a chance of operational success,” but that “no service impacts [are] anticipated.” Please explain the specific “adjustments” that will need to be made and why they will not impact service.

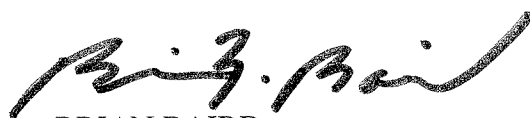
It was also stated in the November meeting that there is little way to tell in advance which employees will be impacted by this plan or how it will impact employers at the time of implementation. However, as indicated in the Area Mail Processing study, USPS has clearly arrived at a specific number of employees who will be impacted. How has USPS analyzed the impact of this plan on workers, and have you discussed the potential impacts with the workers calculated in the report? What are the estimated employee impacts?

USPS staff said in the meeting with Congressional staff that you are working with unions - American Postal Workers Union and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union – to move forward in addressing the impact on employees. How will you work to address their concerns in the face of growing criticism for the plan?

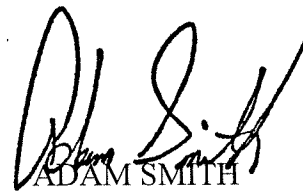
As you know, USPS proposed a similar plan for centralizing operations in 1987, and was met with much resistance from the community. The plan for centralization was subsequently dropped. Does the USPS consider the history of opposition by local, state and congressional government representatives, local mailers and the community as they conduct analyses and consider plans to consolidate? If so, what is the rationale for proceeding with the consolidation of the Olympia P&DC and partial removal of the Olympia postmark in spite of that consideration?

Given the urgency of this situation for many of our constituents, we ask for a prompt reply and to delay implementation of this plan until our concerns have been satisfactorily addressed. Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,



BRIAN BAIRD  
Member of Congress



ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress

c: Thomas G. Day, USPS; Linda Macasa, USPS