

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 10, 2024

Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.
Washington DC 20260

Postmaster DeJoy:

We write to share our concerns about the current process for the United States Postal Service's (USPS) Mail Processing Facility Review (MPFR). We believe the potential downsizing or significant reorganization of mail processing facilities through this process could adversely affect South Dakota.

We share your belief that all Americans deserve the USPS's highest service standards. We also recognize that some infrastructure changes and system modernizations may be necessary to mitigate USPS's financial pressures. However, such changes should not come at the expense of rural and highly rural populations in South Dakota or similar states.

Over the past few decades, rural communities across South Dakota have seen their postal processing facilities consolidated. In 2012, the USPS closed Customer Service Mail Processing Centers in Pierre, Aberdeen, and Mobridge. Decades before, the Government Accountability Office warned that South Dakotans would face delivery delays resulting from similar closures. This would be due to the routing of local mail and packages through more distant processing facilities. We believe that further curtailment of processing operations in South Dakota could yield additional delays and costs not apparent through the MPFR process. Specifically, with mail being rerouted out of state, we are concerned that there could be added delays stemming from adverse weather that would affect rural towns, other small communities and tribal nations across South Dakota. Additionally, there could be added costs owing to the increased expense of transportation to rural customers over greater distances.

We urge you to avoid downsizing or significantly reorganizing mail processing operations in states like South Dakota without considering the particular effects on rural areas. We also remind you of the need to balance any organizational and operational changes with the USPS's unique universal service obligation as broadly outlined in multiple statutes, including 39 U.S.C. §101(b), which requires the USPS to provide "a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas."

We ask that you respond by May 1, 2024, addressing our concerns. Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of M. Michael Rounds in blue ink.

M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of John Thune in blue ink.

John Thune
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Dusty Johnson in black ink.

Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress

CC: Michael M. Kubayanda, Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission