

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2023

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

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

We write with great concern regarding the ongoing staffing crisis and resulting mail delays at United States Postal Service locations across Vermont. In the last month alone, we have received a particularly high volume of calls from the Chittenden County town of Hinesburg about insufficient staffing that has resulted in poor customer service. We have heard similar concerning reports from post offices in Williston, South Burlington, and Windham County. These issues are unacceptable; our constituents deserve better.

Across our state, Vermonters have reported First Class mail delays that have lasted for multiple weeks, with businesses and individuals receiving deliveries that include bills whose due dates have passed by the time they are received. We understand that, in Hinesburg alone, there is a backlog of more than 1,000 packages, with several constituents seeing their package listed as “out for delivery” for days or even weeks on the Postal Service’s tracking tool. Some constituents report that, when visiting their local post office to pick up mail or packages, they are told there are not enough staff available to retrieve their mail and that they need to come back at a different time. Moreover, numerous constituents have been told by their post offices that their regular mail will be delayed or not delivered at all some days so that mail carriers can prioritize delivering third-party packages. These delays are nothing short of life-threatening for Vermonters who rely on the Postal Service for prescription medication delivery. In fact, we have heard from multiple constituents who have been forced to order emergency prescription replacements because their original medication never arrived or arrived in unusable condition. That is an outrage.

Let us be clear: this situation in Vermont is not the fault of our postal workers. We are grateful for the tireless efforts of these dedicated federal employees in Vermont—as well as their colleagues across the nation—who are working remarkably hard under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We know postal workers are working 12 hours or more each day, 7 days each week. Their commitment to the work is unwavering, even though they have been entirely let down by Postal Service leadership. Our constituents have been outspoken in their frustration, which lays not with their friends and neighbors who deliver the mail, but with leadership in Washington that has failed to deliver solutions to these systemic, national issues. They understand that, in many regards, the postal delays in the rest of the country are just as bad as in Vermont, but the rural nature of our state makes the result of these delays substantially more acute.

For years, our Vermont Congressional Delegation has engaged with you and regional Postal Service leadership in an attempt to address mail delays and staffing issues, yet no help has come. Vermonters understand what we know to be true: passing the Postal Service Reform Act was critical in ensuring the Postal Service has the financial footing necessary to adequately staff the agency and restore delivery service. We, along with our constituents, expect meaningful progress.

As Postmaster General, you are responsible for the timely delivery of the mail. As the Vermont Delegation noted in our December 2021 letter to you, when you fail in that mission you fail Vermont's seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and small business owners. As such, we request that you provide the following information and answer the following questions by no later than March 1, 2023:

1. The Postal Service's stated mission is "to provide the nation with reliable, affordable, universal mail service" six days a week. Our constituents in the Hinesburg, VT area have not received this level of service. Please explain why the Postal Service has failed to meet its mission in the Hinesburg area.
2. What does the Postal Service plan to do, in the short term, to fix the egregious issues at the Hinesburg, VT Post Office?
3. The Postal Service hired fewer temporary employees and leased less temporary space over the 2022 holiday season than in previous years. How many fewer temporary employees were hired and how much less temporary space was leased in Vermont in 2022 versus 2021? How does holiday mail performance in Vermont compare between these two years?
4. We understand that many qualified applicants remove themselves from the Postal Service's hiring process before their hiring and/or onboarding is complete due to the complexity and length of the process. What efforts has the Postal Service made under your leadership to improve and expedite the hiring process to ensure applicants are brought on board in a timely manner?
5. Please provide an explanation of how you plan to use the improved finances of the Postal Service—following the passage of the Postal Service Reform Act—to fundamentally improve staffing at all levels of the Postal Service. What efforts have you implemented so far? Do you plan to hire additional staff at locations in Vermont, and if so, how many?
6. The Postal Service's Delivering for America Plan—created under your leadership—involves tens of thousands of job cuts through attrition over the next ten years. How many jobs will be impacted in Vermont? How does the Postal Service plan to address existing staffing issues and service delays with fewer employees?

We have made our and our constituents' frustrations regarding your leadership failures clear. The U.S. Postal Service is a critical government agency, not a money-making machine. We expect you to take these staffing issues in Vermont and across the country seriously, and to focus on meeting the Postal Service's duties to the American people.

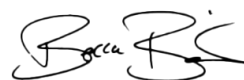
Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator



PETER WELCH  
United States Senator



BECCA BALINT  
United States Congresswoman