

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

July 2, 2014

The Honorable Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe:

I write today to urge you to reconsider your plan to close four processing centers in Minnesota. These closures will hurt the communities that house these facilities, and the greater regions that they currently serve.

First, I am concerned that any financial savings derived from this action will be negated by the subsequent deterioration of service, which will drive more and more customers away. In a letter sent to me announcing the plan, Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman wrote that, "The Postal Service continues to face significant financial challenges associated with the decline in First-Class Mail volume and revenue." This comes after a year of changed service standards, which shifted mail that had been subject to an overnight standard to either the 2-day or 3-5-day service standard. The closures of these facilities will only further deteriorate mail delivery times. I struggle to see how the deterioration of service will help solve your stated problem of declining mail volume.

Second, these closures have already hurt communities in Minnesota. The closures were announced as part of a "network rationalization" plan. The first wave of closures included a processing center in Rochester, Minnesota. I've heard from my constituents that as a result of this closure, a letter sent from one Rochester address to another in the same city now travels all the way to the Twin Cities, and can take up to eleven days to get back down to Rochester. There's nothing rational about that.

I understand that the Postal Service is under severe financial strain, which is why I supported bipartisan Postal Reform legislation that passed the Senate last Congress. Unfortunately the House did not consider that bill, and work remains in Congress. But closing facilities, uprooting employees and degrading your customer service will only cause more harm. I would therefore urge you to avoid deteriorating mail service in Minnesota and to refrain from closing additional facilities.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator