

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 23, 2021

Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster DeJoy,

We write with great concern about the Postal Service's continued failure to meet its own standards of service. In October 2020, we wrote to you asking for the immediate delivery of critical equipment needed at the White River Junction Processing and Distribution Center in White River Junction, Vermont. Over a year later, this issue remains unresolved. An increasing number of Vermonters have also been reporting significant issues with daily mail delivery and parcels being prioritized over First Class mail.

In July 2020, one of White River Junction's two functioning AFCS 100 series machines had been removed in preparation for the arrival of a new AFCS 200 series. This was good news, as the old machine had been due to be replaced for several years. However, the replacement machine never came. After months of delay, during which time the facility had only one working machine, we were told a 200 series machine would be delivered from Hartford, Connecticut in January 2021. However, that machine was never delivered. Instead, ten months later, on October 15, 2021, the facility was sent a machine from Morgan Station, New York that had been stripped for parts and was completely unusable – a fact that was not identified until installation because it was not tested in New York prior to shipment, as required.

When we reported these issues to your staff, we were initially told this defective machine would be fixed in January 2022. When we followed up about the delay at the beginning of December, your staff refused to even commit to a January repair date, adding that they were unclear whether the plan was to fix the broken machine or find another replacement machine. They also could not tell us whether White River Junction, the region, or headquarters would bear the cost of the replacement or repair.

On behalf of Vermonters, those who are U.S. Postal Service employees as well as all those who rely on the timely processing of the mail, we call on you to install a fully operational machine immediately.

It is entirely unacceptable that Vermonters have been without two working machines since July 2020, were forced to wait until October 2021 to get a broken, non-working machine, and now have no chance of having an operational machine until 2022 at the earliest. As Postmaster General, you are responsible for the timely delivery of the mail. Vermont's seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities who rely on the Postal Service have told us that the message they receive when that fails to happen is that you simply do not care about them, or about your duty as a

public servant. Vermonters have been forced to pay late fees on mortgage payments and those living on fixed incomes have failed to receive Social Security and VA disability checks that they need to survive. That is unacceptable to them, and to us.

We would like clear answers to the following questions by December 27:

1. When will the White River Junction Processing and Distribution Center have a working AFCS 200 cancellation machine?
2. Will USPS headquarters cover all costs associated with getting the facility a working cancellation machine?
3. USPS protocol is that all machines are tested before shipment. Did that test occur before the Morgan Station, New York machine was delivered to White River Junction? If not, why not? If the test did occur, why was the facility sent a defective machine?

Additionally, we need the following questions answered by January 7:

1. It is the stated mission of the USPS to provide the nation with reliable, affordable, universal mail service six days a week. While we recognize the challenges of the pandemic, many Vermonters across our state are reporting they are not receiving daily mail and are regularly going multiple days with no delivery. What steps is USPS taking to address these delivery failures and ensure customers are receiving their mail in a timely manner?
2. We have heard from many constituents who have been told by local post offices that packages are being prioritized over regular First Class mail despite USPS headquarters stating otherwise. Are there any circumstances under which USPS is prioritizing packages over First Class mail? If not, is USPS taking any steps to ensure this does not happen?
3. Acute staffing shortages are one of the primary causes of mail delivery delays. What is the USPS doing to improve and expedite its hiring process to ensure applicants are brought on board in a timely manner?

During this holiday season – as well as each and every day – we are grateful for the tireless efforts of our dedicated postal employees. They are working remarkably hard under extraordinary circumstances and deserve to know that you, their Postmaster General, support their efforts and will provide them with the equipment they need to do their job.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PETER WELCH
United States Congressman