
Concerns About Rural Service

The Postal Regulatory Commission (Commission) is reviewing the Postal Service's planned changes to its processing and transportation networks as part of its Delivering for America (DFA) Plan, in accordance with the statutory procedures for issuing an advisory opinion outlined at [39 U.S. Code § 3661](#).

The Postal Service first filed a request for an advisory opinion from the Commission on October 4, 2024, after stakeholders began voicing concerns about the proposed changes' possible impacts on service, especially in rural areas. Under the Postal Service's plan, it intends to cut back on the number of daily mail collections from post offices located more than 50 miles from a Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RPDC). Because of this, mail dropped off at a post office after morning pickup in these areas will sit overnight, not entering the Postal Service's system until the following morning. Since most processing centers are located closer to cities where there is heavier mail and package volume, this change will likely result in delivery delays for those sending mail in rural areas.

As part of these changes, the Postal Service is also rerouting mail across its network, which will likely also affect service in rural areas. In some instances, this means mail moving between two addresses within a state will actually leave the state to be processed. In New Hampshire, for example, mail and packages will travel to Boston before returning back to New Hampshire for delivery.

The Postal Service's description of its planned changes and request for an advisory opinion can be found here:

- [United States Postal Service Request for an Advisory Opinion on Changes in the Nature of Postal Services](#)

These changes have triggered concerns from Congress. At a [Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs](#) hearing regarding the proposed changes, Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) pressed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, arguing against changes that would disproportionately affect rural post offices. In his exchange with DeJoy, Hawley committed to “work[ing] with everybody I can across this dais to protect delivery to rural America.” The following clip and press release from Sen. Hawley recount his promise to “kill” the plan:

- [Hawley Presses USPS For Answers Behind New Postal Plan's Disservice To Rural America](#)
- ['You've Exhausted my Patience': Hawley Presses USPS for Answers Behind New Postal Plan & Harms to Rural America - Josh Hawley](#)

The House Oversight and Accountability Committee had similar concerns, adding to bipartisan skepticism of the proposed changes. Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) critiqued the Postal Service's decision to lower service standard targets next year, saying the Postal Service should aim to improve service rather than merely lower the standard. He also pointed out that the Postal Service [raised its prices in July](#) and plans to do so again in [January 2025](#), saying “[u]nder Mr. DeJoy’s leadership, Americans are paying higher prices for worse service.”

Industry stakeholders have also opined on the changes, sharing Congress’s concerns that rural areas that depend on mail and package delivery from the Postal Service will experience degraded service:

- [Missouri Farm Bureau raises concerns that proposed USPS changes could slow rural service | KCUR - Kansas City news and NPR](#)
- [NRECA Opposes Proposed Curbs on Rural Mail Service - America's Electric Cooperatives](#)
- [Expect Delays: Postal Service downgrades service performance targets - Save the Post Office](#)
- [Testimony Before the House Oversight and Accountability Committee on Reforms to the USPS | Council For Citizens Against Government Waste](#)

Media across the country has also reported on these concerns:

- [Postal changes will harm rural America - Central Wisconsin News](#)
- [Postmaster General Louis DeJoy covers ears during hearing on Postal Service](#)
- [Deeply Disappointed in USPS, Town Hall](#)
- [4 things to know about the Postal Service plan to slow rural mail delivery - Cardinal News](#)
- [Opinion: U.S. Postal 'reforms' would leave rural Missourians behind](#)
- [Proposed postal changes could slow down rural mail, Hoptown Chronicle](#)
- [Wyomingites Have Lots Of Questions About USPS Rural Mail Plan, Get Few Answers | Cowboy State Daily](#)
- [MO Postal Union Fears Rural Areas Face Biggest Impact from Proposed Cuts](#)
- [Proposed Postal Changes Could Slow Down Rural Mail | The Daily Yonder](#)
- [The Postal Grinch who stole rural Coloradans' Christmas | OPINION | Opinion | coloradopolitics.com](#)

