

January 27, 2022

Via E-mail

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260-3500

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

In recent weeks, I have received a notable increase in complaints from constituents detailing inconsistent levels of mail service. As I have emphasized in the past, people in Maine especially rely on the U.S. Postal Service's consistency and reliability—Maine is a rural state with the highest median age population, and Maine people use the Postal Service for many reasons; from items that simply aren't available close to home, to affordable prescriptions, to financial documents for those who prefer them on paper or simply don't have good internet access. In Maine, it is a real and significant problem for people to go days without mail delivery. While improved over the past year, I also continue to get regular constituent accounts of mail that has taken weeks to reach its destination.

I recognize that national labor shortages and the Omicron variant do not spare the Postal Service, and I am grateful for the postal employees in Maine and across the nation who are putting in long hours of mandatory overtime and being flexible when re-assigned to get our mail to its destination safely and to the very best of their ability. Indeed, many of the people who contact me on postal problems match them with praise for the Postal Service staff in their hometowns and neighborhoods. That said, amid the challenges we currently face as a nation, and as the Postal Service prepares to ship up to one billion coronavirus test kits in the near future, it strikes me as unreasonable and unproductive for some addresses to go whole weeks without any mail delivery, or for other addresses to receive Postal Service packages from several different trucks in one day but not receive letters.

I understand the Postal Service has a new protocol in place to address extreme staff shortages that strategically leaves a number of routes without delivery on certain days so that no routes are impacted on consecutive days. Input from constituents leads me to believe this policy is not being properly administered, and I request your clarification of whether people in Maine are actually going without mail for multiple days and your commitment to ensure that no one goes more than one day without service. My staff would be happy to provide details on the areas from which the most egregious delays are being reported.

As mentioned above, I still regularly hear examples where someone in Maine has sent or received mail that took a shockingly long time to reach its destination. This is especially troubling given the recent protraction of delivery standards under your Delivering for America plan, which was promised to greatly increase certainty. I look forward to receiving an explanation of these ongoing delivery delays and analysis of how the new standards can be met without exception. I have included a list of additional questions that I hope your staff can answer and help me better understand the current situation and what Congress can do to improve it.

As the country continues to address the ramifications of the coronavirus pandemic, we have all come to see how important the Postal Service is to conducting our lives with some semblance of normality and safety. The Postal Service's vaunted ability to reach every address in America will continue to prove essential to our national pandemic response, not least because it is the most efficient means by which to distribute hundreds of millions of rapid COVID tests to people in all corners of the country. The Postal Service delays we have seen in Maine must not keep residents from receiving COVID tests and the clarity that comes through rapid results, nor should the delivery of other important mail like medicine and mortgage payments be subject to further delays.

Thank you for your attention to the issues I have raised, and my thanks to your hardworking employees and contractors who are doing their best with the time and resources they have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angus S. King, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator

Enclosure:

Specific questions for response

Enclosure to January 27, 2022, letter to Postmaster General DeJoy from Senator King

1. **General staffing in Maine:** how many open positions does USPS currently have in Maine?
 - a. Is the number of open positions generally decreasing, increasing, or steady?
 - b. What specific plans does USPS have to increasing applications and hiring via its current recruiting efforts?
 - c. What new resources or policies could assist USPS to increase hiring?

2. **Acute/sudden staffing challenges in Maine:** on average, what percentage of Maine USPS employees are out sick—numbers by whatever breakdown they are available are welcome: weekly, monthly averages?
 - a. What percentage of Maine USPS employees are out sick compared to other states?
 - b. What percentage of Contract Delivery Service carriers have been out sick in Maine, and how does that compare to other states?
 - c. It is understood that the absence of a letter carrier in rural places is much harder to cover than urban ones: how does Maine compare to other states with respect to addresses that go without delivery?

3. **Triaged delivery:** to what extent is USPS triaging mail delivery? For example, packages over First Class flats.
 - a. Also, please share any data on how many addresses go without normal delivery for more than one day.

4. **Rapid COVID test logistics:** What delivery standard will be used to deliver test kits?
 - a. What impact will this volume have on the delivery of all other mail in the system?
 - b. Which type(s) of mail will be prioritized?

5. **Delivery standards:** could you please share analysis on how well USPS is meeting the new First Class delivery standards for Maine addresses/mail sent from Maine?

6. **Public advice/communications:** many constituents who are not getting home delivery often express frustration that they can't get any information about the circumstance. They often say they try to call Post Offices, etc., which may detract USPS employees further from getting mail out.
 - a. How may people confirm that they (unfortunately/due to extreme circumstances) won't get mail 'today'?
 - b. Among the extraordinary measures (like sending managers out to deliver mail) that USPS is taking to cover routes where a carrier is out sick, what else can be done where some people in a town say they don't get mail for a week at a time, while people not far away have not had any interruption?

7. **PO Boxes:** Is 'delivery' to PO Boxes also facing interruption?
 - a. If so, could you please characterize it quantitatively?
 - b. Would people who have a strong desire or need to receive mail everyday find new/related value in renting a PO Box?