

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

INTERNET:
<http://baucus.senate.gov>

November 29, 2011

Mr. Patrick Donahoe
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 10022
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

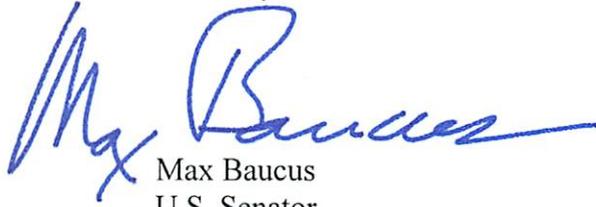
I want to voice my total disagreement with the proposals by the Postal Service to consolidate mail processing operations in Missoula and Kalispell. I strongly encourage the Postal Service to take into account the feedback they gather at the public meetings and to understand the unintended consequences of these proposals. Dozens of jobs are on the line, in addition to the quality of service that Montanans expect. While I understand the Postal Service must make some tough choices to get out of the red, it makes no sense to send mail from Montana out of state, over two mountain passes and back. These proposals will cost valuable jobs and cause a loss of revenue for the Postal Service.

It's hard for bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. to comprehend the vastness of Montana. But every day, Montanans from Sula to Yaak rely on efficient and timely mail delivery every day to operate businesses, receive time-sensitive prescription medication, receive Social Security checks, and to stay connected with friends and family. Moving mail processing to Spokane will take good-paying jobs out of communities that have been hit hard economically. Processing Missoula and Kalispell's mail in Spokane would change one-day local delivery in Western Montana to two or three. This reduction in service would be devastating for small businesses, families, and seniors. As the Montana Secretary of State, Linda McCulloch, has also noted, these changes could also affect the delivery of absentee mail-in ballots for Montanans, which are critically important to Montana's electoral process.

The changes the Postal Service is considering as it works toward financial sustainability are not just wrong for Montana, but also wrong for your organization. Montanans and Americans everywhere will take their business to your competitors if it takes longer to send and receive mail, or if folks in rural areas need to travel farther for their post offices. Organizational changes that reduce or delay services will be detrimental for the long-run bottom line of the Postal Service. I strongly encourage the Postal Service to fully take into account the comments that they receive in Kalispell and Missoula, to consider the long-term effects of lowering delivery standards and reducing services, and to abandon the studies of these consolidations.

I look forward to working with you on long-term solutions for the Postal Service that are right for Montana and I appreciate your prompt consideration of my strong concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Max Baucus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Max Baucus
U.S. Senator