

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Jefferson Dr., S.W.
Washington D.C. 20024

The Honorable Bette Brand
Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Jefferson Dr., S.W.
Washington D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Perdue and Deputy Under Secretary Brand:

Thank you for your commitment to providing our nation's rural communities with the funding and essential services they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, as the pandemic has pushed families out of their schools, workplaces, and community centers, rural Americans are relying more than ever on the essential services provided by the United States Postal Service (USPS). In light of the severe financial challenges facing the Postal Service, we write to share our deep concern that any reduction in services or move to privatize the Postal Service will negatively impact both USDA Rural Development and the millions of Americans that you serve every day who live in rural areas and make up an essential part of our economic and social fabric. We urge you to publicly affirm and convey to the President and his Administration the importance of the Postal Service to our rural communities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans are relying more than ever on the Postal Service for lifesaving medications and daily supplies, and small businesses are leaning on e-commerce to stay afloat. While the Postal Service is a vital resource for all Americans, it is especially so for those who live in rural communities, especially for those who live in poverty or experience disabilities. 80 percent of American households without reliable, affordable high-speed internet live in rural areas, and they rely on the USPS to get their life-saving medications, stay connected with loved ones, and even receive their paychecks and pay bills.

Unfortunately, the Postal Service is now confronting grave financial difficulties. During recent testimony to Congress, former Postmaster General Megan Brennan stated that, absent congressional intervention, the Postal Service could run out of funds by the end of September 2020.

Because USPS is the largest delivery service and the only mail carrier that guarantees delivery to every address in America, we are deeply concerned about how the Postal Service's dire financial condition may negatively impact rural communities, many of which are already struggling. If the Postal Service cannot secure emergency funding, many towns will be meaningfully cut off from the rest of the country and left without the resources they need to respond to this crisis. We believe that a public Postal Service must be a crucial aspect of our efforts to support the revitalization of our rural communities as we emerge from this pandemic.

If you have similarly concluded that a severe reduction in USPS service would negatively affect the rural Americans you serve, we request that you convey these concerns to the President and to others in the Administration.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this issue. Again, we believe that protecting the long-term financial health of the Postal Service will also help safeguard the well-being of Americans living in rural areas. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support them at this difficult moment in our nation's history.

Sincerely,



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress