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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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January 27, 2020

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G St NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) plays a critical role for our people, businesses, and economy, and USPS is expected to provide prompt and reliable mail service to the entire country. That service is especially important to rural customers.

While I deeply appreciate USPS's commitment to serve all postal customers, I am concerned that USPS's efforts to address financial and operational challenges in the past several years have disproportionately affected rural communities. For example, consolidating processing facilities has required additional transportation, which has delayed mail delivery in rural areas. Reducing hours at thousands of small, mostly rural post offices (i.e., the POSTPlan initiative) has reduced access to USPS products and services. Though we hear from our constituents that these changes are impacting their communities, the extent and nature of these impacts is unclear.

Additionally, I regularly hear from our constituents about various mail delivery issues—from transit time that seems to be longer than USPS reports, to mail that is not delivered at all. While USPS collects and reports data on delivery performance, the information necessary to assess these issues was not previously available. That has now changed with USPS's new internal performance measurement system. My understanding is that USPS now collects data that can be used to measure service performance at a more granular level, including in specific rural areas. But while this information is available, USPS does not routinely publish it, and it is unknown how or if USPS uses this information to assess its efforts.

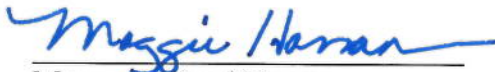
Given this, I would like GAO's help to explore key issues important to this committee:

1. To what extent does USPS assess the impact of operational or procedural changes on rural locations prior to making changes or after those changes have been made?
2. To what extent does mail delivery performance differ by geographic location, including rural locations and to what extent can the data be used to assess impacts of program or policy changes?

3. What efforts is USPS is making to ensure that the data collected accurately reflect the experience of rural customers and mailers?
4. How has USPS addressed any service issues the data may identify?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact Allison M. Tinsey (allison\_tinsey@hsgac.senate.gov) on my staff for more information and to discuss this request further.

Sincerely,



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Margaret Wood Hassan

Ranking Member

Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency  
Management Subcommittee