

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

Postal Rate and Fee Changes

Docket No. R2006-1

PRESIDING OFFICER'S RULING GRANTING MOTIONS
FOR DEFERRED FILING OF FOREVER STAMP TESTIMONY
AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES

(Issued July 18, 2006)

On July 14, 2006, the Postal Service filed a motion requesting leave to file testimony on its Forever Stamp proposal.¹ The testimony consists of Direct Testimony of Altaf H. Taufique on Behalf of United States Postal Service (USPS-T-48), and an associated library reference, USPS-LR-L-152, both filed on July 14, 2006. The Forever Stamp proposal would amend the Domestic Mail Classification Schedule to establish a non-denominated stamp that would represent postage for the first ounce of First-Class Mail letters. It would be purchased at the prevailing rate at the time of purchase and would constitute valid postage even if the rate were to change in the future. The Postal Service's Motion for deferred filing of the Forever Stamp testimony is granted.

The Postal Service apprised the Commission of its intent to defer filing of its Forever Stamp testimony when it first filed its request in Motion of the United States Postal Service for Partial Waiver or Suspension of Commission Rules Specifying Materials to be Filed in Support of its Request for Changes in Postal Rates and Classifications, May 3, 2006. At the pre-hearing conference, I indicated my inclination to grant this motion. Tr. 1/44. Now that the Forever Stamp testimony has been accepted for deferred filing, this motion also is granted.

¹ Motion of the United States Postal Service for Deferred Filing of Forever Stamp Testimony, July 14, 2006 (Motion).

The Postal Service suggests that no more than four weeks of discovery be permitted on the Forever Stamp proposal. In anticipation of the filing of Forever Stamp testimony, Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2006-1/12, issued June 30, 2006, established an August 7, 2006 closed of discovery deadline. This provides approximately three weeks of discovery from today's date. The August 7, 2006, deadline will be retained pending any showing that additional discovery is necessary.

The Postal Service has filed a motion requesting the establishment of settlement procedures in Docket No. R2006-1 for the limited purpose of considering settlement of the issues related to the Forever Stamp proposal.² The motion for establishment of limited settlement procedures is granted. The Postal Service is designated as settlement coordinator, and is to provide settlement reports, as necessary, to inform the Commission on the status of a potential limited settlement. The Commission's hearing room will be made available upon request, and pending availability, for settlement conferences.

The Postal Service requests the establishment of a deadline of September 6, 2006, for participants to give notice of whether or not they intend to oppose the Forever Stamp proposal. Settlement at 3. The Commission encourages settlement discussions in general, and recognizes that the Postal Service is free to informally solicit opinions from the participants on their positions on the Forever Stamp proposal in this case. However, the issue of the Forever Stamp proposal is one of many issues under consideration in Docket No. R2006-1. It is premature at this stage of the proceeding for participants to formally declare their position on any one issue.

² Motion of the United States Postal Service for Establishment of Settlement Procedures for Forever Stamp Proposal, July 14, 2006 (Settlement).

RULING

1. The Motion of the United States Postal Service for Deferred Filing of Forever Stamp Testimony, filed July 14, 2006, is granted.
2. The Motion of the United States Postal Service for Partial Waiver or Suspension of Commission Rules Specifying Materials to be Filed in Support of its Request for Changes in Postal Rates and Classifications, filed May 3, 2006, is granted.
3. The Motion of the United States Postal Service for Establishment of Settlement Procedures for Forever Stamp Proposal, filed July 14, 2006, is granted, consistent with the body of this ruling.

George Omas
Presiding Officer