

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

Station and Branch Optimization and
Consolidation Initiative, 2009

Docket No. N2009-1

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF COMMISSION JURISDICTION BY THE
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO
(July 9, 2009)

The American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO (APWU) submits this Statement in Support of Commission Jurisdiction in response to the Request of the United States Postal Service for an Advisory Opinion, filed July 2, 2009. In its Request, USPS asks the Postal Regulatory Commission to determine whether the proposed Station and Branch Optimization and Consolidation Initiative “constitutes a substantially nationwide change in the nature of postal services within the meaning of 39 U.S.C. § 3661(b).”¹ The Initiative proposed by the Postal Service fits squarely within the Commission’s jurisdiction under Section 3661 of Title 39. We urge the Commission to issue a Notice of Proceeding on the record pursuant to Section 17 of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure and establish a procedural schedule that permits robust discovery of the Initiative.

Like the Postal Service Evolutionary Network Development program, the subject of the proceedings in Docket No. N2006-1, the Postal Service asserts that the exact impact of the Initiative is not currently known. But in Docket N2006-1, neither the Commission, nor any party asserted that the Commission lacked jurisdiction. Instead, the Commission found the changes proposed by the END program “are *likely* to involve qualitative ‘changes in the nature of postal services.’”²

The Station and Branch Optimization Initiative surely constitutes “a change in the nature of postal services which will generally affect service on a nationwide or

¹ Request of USPS for an Advisory Opinion of Changes in Postal Services, July 2, 2009, at p. 1.

² N2006-1 PRC Advisory Opinion, December 19, 2006, at p. 9 (*emphasis added*).

substantially nationwide basis.”³ The Postal Service Request indicates that the Initiative will involve the review of “approximately two-thirds of the universe of over 4800 postal stations and branches nationwide.”⁴ While the Postal Service states that it does not know how many of these stations and branches will ultimately be targeted for “discontinuance of operations” it is very clear that under the Initiative the relocation of numerous P.O. Boxes will be a common, if not inevitable, consequence.

Furthermore, the stations and branches under examination are located “primarily in urban and suburban population centers.”⁵ Therefore, some, perhaps many of the station and branches that may be affected are located in areas where residents rely on public transportation. Closing or relocating these facilities will undoubtedly change the nature of postal services and create a hardship for this population. An additional question that must be explored is whether the effect of these closures will disproportionately affect low income households, racial or ethnic minorities, and the elderly.

The Postal Service filing also appears incomplete. It mentions a process by which the stations and branches will be reviewed but it provides no documentation of what this process entails. Therefore, in addition to docketing this case as a proceeding on the record, we respectfully request that the Commission order the Postal Service to immediately submit any documents related to plans and procedures of the Initiative so they can be examined at the outset, thereby allowing the proceeding to move forward without unreasonable delay.

Respectfully submitted,

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³ 39 USC § 3661(b).

⁴ USPS Request at p. 6.

⁵ Id.