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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

Before Commissioners:

Edward J. Gleiman, Chairman;
George A. Omas, Vice Chairman;
Dana B. Covington, Sr.; Ruth Y. Goldway;
and W.H. "Trey" LeBlanc III

Mailing Online Experiment

Docket No. MC2000-2

NOTICE OF INQUIRY NO. 1 CONCERNING
PROPOSED DOMESTIC MAIL CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE LANGUAGE

(January 21, 2000)

The Postal Service is proposing modifications to the Domestic Mail Classification Schedule (DMCS) and the associated Rate and Fee Schedules as described in the Request of the United States Postal Service for a Recommended Decision on an Experimental Classification and Fee Schedule for Mailing Online (Request), Attachments A and B. The proposed modifications, if implemented, would allow the Postal Service to provide Mailing Online at the specified postage rates. The modifications would not allow any other functionally equivalent service, which did not comply with the applicable existing volume minimums, to utilize the same specified postage rates.

Witness Plunkett indicates that the Postal Service is willing to consider exemptions from volume minimums for other services that are comparable to Mailing Online.¹ Tr. 2/80. He further states that the Postal Service is willing to discuss potential definitions of what is a comparable or functionally equivalent service to Mailing Online.

¹ Witness Plunkett has replaced witness Garvey in this proceeding. Witness Plunkett has adopted the written testimony and written cross-examination presented to him during the January 12, 2000 hearing that was prepared by witness Garvey. Tr. 2/69-71


Witness Plunkett and Postal Service counsel reiterated a willingness to consider exemptions from volume minimums for other services that are comparable to Mailing Online during the January 12, 2000, hearing. Tr. 2/266-71.

Postal Service counsel invited the Commission to recommend DMCS language that would allow the Postal Service discretion to authorize other functionally equivalent services to enter mail on the same terms as Mailing Online during the January 12, 2000, hearing. Tr. 2/270. The Postal Service expressed a preference to provide the definition of what is a functionally equivalent service in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) and not in the DMCS. Tr. 2/269. However, the Service reports that at least one participant would prefer to have the definition contained directly in the DMCS.

Participants are requested to propose language for the DMCS and the associated Rate and Fee Schedules that would overcome any perceived inequity in the application of volume minimums. Proposals may provide for Postal Service determination of functional equivalency or may include a specific definition of what would qualify. Participants should submit supporting rationale for their position.

Responses will be due on or before February 10, 2000. Participants who wish to have portions of their responses included in the evidentiary record should have the material attested to by a witness who is prepared to stand cross-examination on the material. The Commission will review and consider all comments when exercising its discretion to recommend, or recommend with modifications, the proposed Postal Service changes to the DMCS and the associated Rate and Fee Schedules.

By the Commission.
(S E A L)


Margaret P. Crenshaw
Secretary