

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

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POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 2000

Docket No. R2000-1  
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**OBJECTION OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO POPKIN INTERROGATORIES DBP/USPS-231 THROUGH 238**

The United States Postal Service hereby objects to the following interrogatories filed by Mr. Popkin on May 12, 2000, and directed to the Postal Service: DBP/USPS-231 through 238.

These questions seek information which relate to postal matters within the very broad areas of interest to the requester, but which have no bearing on the issues before the Commission in an omnibus rate proceeding.

**DBP/USPS-231**

In this interrogatory, Mr. Popkin seeks to characterize interrogatories previously objected to -- DBP/USPS-70(a)-(k), 71, and 72(f)-(i) -- as "following-up" on the May 4, 2000, response of the Postal Service to a Question posed by Commissioner Goldway on April 25, 2000. Mr. Popkin's attempt to resuscitate these interrogatories does not overcome the Commission's May 10, 2000, determination that these questions request information beyond the scope of this proceeding. See Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/59, at 2-3 and 5, the response to Commissioner Goldway's question, notwithstanding.

**DBP/USPS-232**

This interrogatory asks that the Postal Service list "all changes to the standards that existed at the approval of Docket No. N89-1 that have been made either through the process described" in the memorandum attached to the May 4, 2000, response of witness Mayes to Commissioner Goldway's hearing room question or "as a result of adjustment to new circumstances."

The Postal Service objects to this question. This is a proceeding brought under § 3622, not § 3661. The fact that the document provided by the Postal Service in response to Commissioner Goldway's question unavoidably refers to some matters outside the scope of this proceeding does not make every one of those matters subject to further discovery in this proceeding. Discovery in Docket No. R2000-1 is governed by the requirement that the material sought be relevant to issues before the Commission in this docket.

Notwithstanding Mr. Popkin's interest in every conceivable change in service commitments among the hundreds of 3-digit Zip Code areas in the last decade, this proceeding has been instituted for the purpose of reviewing changes in postal costs between the FY 98 base year and the FY 20001 test year and to determine rates and fees appropriate for the test year. The purposes of this proceeding would not be advanced by a list indicating each and every instance that a First-Class Mail service commitment between specific pairs of 3-digit ZIP Code areas went from one day to two days or two days to three days (or vice versa) in the past decade, or even in the last several years.

As indicated at page 5 of Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/59 (May 10, 2000), "[i]nquiries concerning the criteria employed by the Postal Service to develop delivery standards, as distinct from inquiries concerning actual performance, are one step removed from, and therefore of limited relevance to issues before the Commission in general rate proceedings." The same can be said of individual adjustments which occur in service commitments between 3-digit Zip Code pairs over the course of time.

DBP/USPS-233

Subpart (a) of this question seeks information already provided in the May 4, 2000, response to the Question from Commissioner Goldway.

Subpart (b) of this question seeks information which "explain[s] how decisions on

requested changes [in service commitments between specific 3-digit Zip Code pairs] are evaluated. It also seeks details on distinctions made between First-Class Mail and Priority Mail. On the basis of the above cited passage from Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/59, the Postal Service objects.

DBP/USPS-234

This interrogatory requests a copy of a diskette which contains information designed to reflect the service standards between each of the specific 3-digit ZIP Code pairs in the United States for various mail classes. As valuable and relevant as it may be for other purposes, the Postal Service considers such disaggregated point-to-point service standard information to be irrelevant to the broad review of § 3622 "value of service" considerations which takes place in postal ratemaking. Accordingly, the Postal Service objects to this interrogatory. Nevertheless, without waiving its right to object to questions concerning the specific contents of the diskette, the Postal Service will file as a Library Reference a copy of the FY 2000, Q 3 Service Standards diskette.<sup>1</sup>

DBP/USPS-235

This interrogatory requests examples of documentation that would either support or not support changes in service commitments between 3-digit Zip Code areas. It then asks for a discussion of the effect of capital expenditures, workhours and transportation costs on evaluations for changes. The purposes of Docket No. R2000-1 are unrelated to an exploration of what it might take to justify changing service commitments between given pairs of 3-digit Zip Codes. The interrogatory veers well outside the scope of ratemaking and classification and into evaluation of internal postal management

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<sup>1</sup> The Postal Service pauses from its objections to respond to DBP/USPS-239 in a manner which does the least insult to the environment: The acronym "NASS" identifies the National Air and Surface System, which is used to plan the transportation of domestic, international and military mail by the Postal Service.

operational matters which, at best, might be relevant to a proceeding brought under § 3661. On the basis of the above cited passage from Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/59, the Postal Service objects.

DBP/USPS-236

For all intents and purposes, this question might as well read:

"Please refer me to those portions of the Docket No. N89-1 record (copies of which I discarded long ago) which discuss how reductions in [delivery] service could be perceived by the public as being an improvement of service."

The question seeks to use discovery as a vehicle for obtaining information related to one of the numerous postal matters of interest to Mr. Popkin which have no bearing on the issues in this proceeding. It consists of an inquiry "concerning the criteria employed by the Postal Service to develop delivery standards, as distinct from inquiries concerning actual performance," making it "one step removed from, and therefore of limited relevance to issues before the Commission in general rate proceedings." Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/59, at 5. Accordingly, the Postal Service objects.

DBP/USPS-237

This interrogatory refers to "Customer Needs" information obtained from Product Management or Consumer Affairs which might be addressed in a internal postal management review of a request for a change in service commitments between 3-digit ZIP Code pairs. "Customer Needs" information refers to any information that might indicate that there is substantial customer interest in the service standards between a particular 3-digit Zip Code pair. Such information might relate to commercial traffic between city pairs, relocation of a remittance mailer to a particular city, an increase or decrease in mail volume between two points, etc. It might include commercially sensitive and privileged market research. This information relates to the criteria for

reviewing specific service commitments. The question appears to mistakenly assume the existence of a generic set of "Customer Need" information. In any event, the Postal Service considers that it requests information described in the above cited passage from Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/59, which relates to matters beyond the scope of this proceeding.

DBP/USPS-238

This interrogatory asks specific questions about local mail processing and delivery in Baltimore, Maryland, and Hackensack, New Jersey. The requested information is immaterial and irrelevant to the issues in this proceeding. There is no rate or classification determination to be made by the Commission in this docket to which such trivial information has any material relationship. Accordingly, the Postal Service objects.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorney:



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May 22, 2000

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon all participants of record in this proceeding in accordance with section 12 of the Rules of Practice.



Michael T. Tidwell

May 22, 2000