

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

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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 2001

Docket No. R2001-1

RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
WITNESS PICKETT TO QUESTION RAISED AT HEARINGS  
ON DECEMBER 18, 2001

The United States Postal Service hereby provides the response of witness Pickett to a question raised at hearings on December 18, 2001 concerning Amtrak service at Tr. 5/568 and 571.

The question is stated verbatim and is followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys

Daniel J. Foucheaux, Jr.  
Chief Counsel, Ratemaking:

  
Susan M. Duchek

475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20260-1137  
(202) 268-2990; Fax -5402  
December 21, 2001

RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE WITNESS JOHN T.  
PICKETT TO QUESTION POSED AT HEARINGS

**QUESTION:**

Tr. 5/568. "Does the Postal Service take into account whether Amtrak's on-time service is greater or less than in a preceding year before it determines to put mail on Amtrak?"

Tr. 5/571. "So in getting back to us with the response that we asked you for, Mr. Pickett, if you can provide us with any information on whether the people who make these decisions actually take into account Amtrak's actual performance that would be appreciated because, frankly, Mr. Chairman, we're having some difficulty understanding how these decisions are made if there is no data about actual service from which they can be made."

**RESPONSE:**

The Postal Service does not rely on Amtrak's reports of on-time service performance in evaluating Amtrak's performance as a transporter of mail. Amtrak's on-time performance measures a train's actual arrival time relative to its scheduled arrival time. The Postal Service measures Amtrak's performance relative to the scheduled availability time, the time by which Amtrak is scheduled to give the mail back to the Postal Service. The scheduled availability time occurs after the scheduled arrival time of the train itself.

It is my understanding that the Postal Service monitors Amtrak's service performance locally on a daily basis. Amtrak is required to tender mail to the Postal Service by the scheduled availability time. If the mail is tendered after the availability time, the receiving Postal Service office records the event as an irregularity. Depending on how late the tender is, a damage assessment is calculated and may be assessed. Irregularities and the associated damage assessments are then sent to Postal Service Headquarters, which presents them

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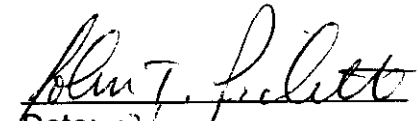
to Amtrak for resolution. (Other service irregularities, such as failure to transfer mail between trains or failure to unload mail, are communicated to Headquarters in a similar fashion.)

An Amtrak train may arrive after its scheduled arrival time and still meet the scheduled mail availability time. Conversely, Amtrak could tender mail to the Postal Service after the scheduled availability time, even when the train itself is on-time.

In the course of investigating this question, I was informed that the actual, final purchasing decision for Amtrak service is made at Headquarters, although with significant input from the field. When a field office becomes dissatisfied with Amtrak service, it communicates this dissatisfaction to Headquarters. Typically, this leads to a dialogue with the local office and Amtrak, and may lead to termination of the particular Amtrak service.

## DECLARATION

I, John T. Pickett, declare under penalty of perjury the foregoing answers are true and correct, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

  
Date: 2/21/01

### **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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan M. Duchek", is written over a horizontal line.

Susan M. Duchek

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