

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, 1997

Docket No. R97-1

OBJECTION OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO UPS/USPS-T2-11, 14,  
AND PARTIAL OBJECTIONS TO UPS/USPS-T2-16-21, 24  
(September 22, 1997)

Pursuant to sections 25 and 26 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, the United States Postal Service hereby objects to the following interrogatories of United Parcel Service: interrogatories UPS/USPS-11 and 14; and objects, in part, to UPS/USPS-T2-16-21 and 24. Each of these interrogatories was filed on September 12, 1997. The interrogatories, which seek a range of information on various Postal Service management information systems, are objectionable on the basis of relevance, burden, and, in some cases, commercial sensitivity. The Postal Service will discuss its objection to each interrogatory in turn.

*UPS/USPS-T2-11 and -14*

UPS/USPS-T2-11 asks for the most current Postal Service "publications, handbooks, manuals, instructions and other literature" regarding the National Air and Surface System (NASS), the Rail Management Information System (RMIS), the Air Contract Support System (ACSS), and the Air Contract Dispatch Computer System (ACDCS). UPS/USPS-T2-14 requests that the Postal Service "provide machine readable copies of the complete files and detailed descriptions of record layouts and

definitions, for FY96, by postal quarter for" NASS, RMIS and ACSS.

The systems for which UPS is seeking detailed information are dynamic and interactive proprietary Postal Service management information systems, which contain, respectively, complete listings of all highway, rail, and air transportation route information (NASS), rail transportation contract information (RMIS), air contract volume and payment information (ACSS), and exact routing information for mail traveling on the Eagle and Western Networks as well as on commercial aircraft (ACDCS). The Postal Service's Transportation Cost System (TRACS) uses only quarterly snapshots of a few particular variables contained in NASS, RMIS, and ACSS for the selection of its samples of purchased transportation. TRACS does not use *any* of these management information systems in their entirety; the Postal Service has already provided machine-readable copies of all information used from these management information systems by TRACS, including field definitions, in the TRACS documentation.

UPS's discovery requests UPS/USPS-T2-11 and 14 would require the Postal Service to document NASS, ACSS, RMIS, and ACDCS, a procedure that is neither necessary for the understanding or use of TRACS, nor is required by the Commission's rules of practice. Rule 31(k) specifically applies to "studies and analyses offered in evidence in hearing proceedings or relied upon as support for other evidence . . . ." None of the management information systems about which UPS seeks information are studies or analyses, nor are they used as such by witness Nieto; they are simply electronic sources from which TRACS extracts certain information. The Commission itself has recognized a difference between databases and the studies and analyses to which Rule 31(k) applies: in Docket No. RM97-2, which focused upon changes to Rule 31(k)(2) as it applied to the presentation and use of market research studies, the Commission discussed "the emergence of electronic data bases, from which a number

of different studies and analyses could be developed . . ." *Order No. 1174, Docket No. RM97-2, May 2, 1997*. These comments signify that the Commission appreciates that there is indeed a distinction between a study, which must be documented, and a database of information, upon which the imposition of onerous documentation requirements could easily constrain its use.

Providing the information requested by UPS regarding NASS, ACSS, RMIS, and ACDCS would require that all of the requested information be located, reviewed by the law department as well as by technical personnel familiar with the material, and, in many cases, redacted prior to being copied. This process, which would present a momentous burden, would not lead to the production of information relevant to the proceeding before the Commission. As the Postal Service indicates above, the documentation that the Postal Service has provided for the TRACS system furnishes UPS with all the information it needs regarding the Postal Service's use of these databases in the scope of TRACS. Requesting more is simply an unreasonable excursion.

#### *UPS/USPS-T2-16*

UPS/USPS-T2-16 asks for origin and destination information for each contract type (Intra-SCF, Inter-SCF, Intra-BMC, and Inter-BMC) and destination facility type (for Intra-SCF contracts: Outbound Other (a.m.), Outbound Other (p.m.), Outbound BMC or SCF, Inbound Other, and Inbound BMC or SCF; for Inter-SCF contracts: BMC, SCF, and Other; for Intra-BMC contracts: Inbound BMC, Inbound SCF, Inbound Other, Outbound SCF, and Outbound Other; and for Inter-BMC contracts: BMC, SCF, and Other) used in the primary stage sample for the TRACS Highway sample design. The Postal Service notes that it will be providing a response to this interrogatory, but with

the identifications of the origin and destination facilities encrypted.

Requiring the Postal Service to provide the origin and destination information requested by UPS not only presents a ridiculous burden in comparison to the relevance of such information, but would additionally reveal sensitive commercial information. First, because the information is going to be provided with the origin/destination identification of facilities encrypted, UPS will be able to use the data to replicate the Postal Service's results. For the Postal Service to go back and identify the origins and destinations, each contract type would need to be looked up and the information extracted. This could take days of time, which the witness could more profitably spend responding to other discovery requests (twenty-two of which have been filed by UPS alone). Moreover, the Postal Service objects to providing the specific identifications of *its origin and destination facilities*, as this information would allow any of the Postal Service's competitors (including the one posing this discovery request) to obtain a wealth of information regarding the volumes of mail transported to and from each of the Postal Service's facilities described in the sample frame. Armed with the information responsive to this interrogatory, UPS would have a detailed description of where each of the Postal Service's trucks are going at any given time, and when they are going there. Release of this information would not only be exceedingly detrimental to the Postal Service's business interests, but would constitute a windfall for its competition.

*UPS/USPS-T2-17-21*

These interrogatories request that the Postal Service provide detailed information regarding the information contained in NASS, RMIS, ACSS, the Official Airline Guide (OAG), and "the data source used to select Amtrak train segment-days and costs thereof" (UPS/USPS-T2-21), "including a definition of the sample frame elements . . .

used by TRACS, and a listing and definition of *all data items associated with each such element*" (emphasis added). To the extent that these discovery requests seek information unrelated to these systems' contribution to TRACS, it is the position of the Postal Service that such information is not only irrelevant to the proposals before the Commission, but that the considerable burden involved in providing this extensive material is simply not warranted. The Postal Service will be providing a response to this discovery request, regarding the data elements that are used directly by TRACS. It should not be required to amplify that information and the material already provided with the detail requested by UPS.

*UPS/USPS-T2-24*

This interrogatory asks the Postal Service to provide "a complete listing of all contract highway routes in effect for the last accounting period of FY 1996," and a range of information related to each contract, including the origin and destinations of each route segment and specific routing information. The Postal Service objects on the grounds that providing this response would require it to entail the substantial burden of marrying the NASS system with another management information system, and that producing the routing and origin-destination specific information would require the release not only of the facility-specific volume information objected to in conjunction with interrogatory UPS/USPS-T2-16, above, but which would additionally release contract cost information that would be very likely to be considered confidential by the Postal Service, as well as by its transportation contractors. The Postal Service has already submitted this information in electronic form, for use in TRACS, and providing the additional detail requested by UPS would add no information of evidentiary value to this proceeding.

*Summary*

UPS has, in this proceeding, as in the past, evinced an extensive interest in the manner in which the Postal Service purchases transportation to move mail between its facilities. The Postal Service has fed UPS's voracious appetite for transportation information with interrogatory responses, a full and complete documentation of the manner in which it samples its purchased transportation contracts, and with visits to postal facilities. However, with the interrogatories discussed above, UPS's appetite has surpassed the material necessary to understand the Postal Service's transportation costs, to an expressed need for thorough details regarding management information systems that supply specific and particular information to TRACS. The provision of these details is not necessary in order to understand TRACS, the documentation of these databases is not required by the Commission's Rules of Practice, and indeed the information requested would lend nothing of relevance to this proceeding. In addition, in the instances noted above, the level of detail requested by UPS would also impair the competitive interests of the Postal Service (and/or the contractors who provide transportation services to the Postal Service) by releasing commercially sensitive information.

It is a simple matter to see that the acquisition of such information may be of

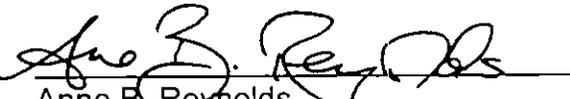
significant interest to UPS, however, it is a distortion of the purposes of this proceeding to allow UPS to freely accumulate it.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

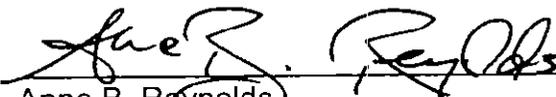
By its attorneys:

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**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.

  
Anne B. Reynolds

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September 22, 1997