

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

POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES  
PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 108-18

Docket No. R2005-1

PARTIAL OBJECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO INTERROGATORIES OF THE MAJOR MAILERS ASSOCIATION  
(MMA/USPS-1-9)  
(June 6, 2005)

As indicated below, the United States Postal Service hereby files partial objections to the above-referenced interrogatories filed by the Major Mailers Association (MMA) on May 26, 2005. The Postal Service objects partially to MMA/USPS-1-9 to the extent these interrogatories seek customer-specific and proprietary information, and overbroad detail on the individuals whose support led to agency decisions regarding PostalOne!. The Postal Service further objects partially to MMA/USPS-7(c) and MMA/USPS-9 because they request information such as names and qualifications of all individuals who have assisted in responding to interrogatories. The Postal Service will, however, respond to all of the interrogatories to the extent it can without providing customer-specific or proprietary information. Furthermore, the Postal Service will describe the background, experience, and qualifications of the individual who coordinated and approved the institutional responses to these institutional interrogatories (which are appended in their entirety to this objection).

MMA/USPS-1-9

The Postal Service objects partially to these interrogatories on the grounds that they seek customer-specific and proprietary information. For example, MMA/USPS-3(a-

b) ask for information from which an industry observer could easily deduce a customer's identity, especially considering that, as indicated in the response to MMA/USPS-T21-33, only 38 customers participate in the PostalOne! program. Moreover, this docket is replete with intervenors who are industry observers, some of whom are PostalOne! users, who could take competitive advantage of that information. Postal Service customers uniformly expect their mailing activity to remain confidential. The Postal Service's ability to retain customers' confidence, and their business, would be significantly impaired if customer-specific information were disclosed in these proceedings. The Commission consistently supports this position.

One interrogatory in this set, MMA/USPS-6, seeks information on the costs evaluated or incurred for customer-specific use of PostalOne! systems. In addition, it seeks Postal Service proprietary estimates related to use of a PostalOne! system at a customer's site, and a model that permits cross-customer evaluation of the return on investment (ROI) for the PostalOne! system. The Postal Service objects to providing any of these. Given the immediate proximity of PostalOne! users and other experts, the likelihood that any response could be tracked to a specific customer is high. The ROI formula is proprietary information, for which the Postal Service has paid tens of thousands of dollars. Providing this formula would require disclosing mailers' profiles, as well as Postal Service site-specific handling plans. As such, it would also harm the Postal Service's ability to negotiate with PostalOne! customers to improve the ROI, and with the contractors who certify or modify mailers' practices as part of implementation. Notwithstanding, meaningful responses to the interrogatories can be provided without releasing sensitive information or details.

MMA/USPS-7(c) and 9

These interrogatories request the name and title of the persons who assist in developing the Postal Service's responses to MMA/USPS-T21-33(k), MMA/USPS-T21-16, 17, and 33, and MMA/USPS-1-8 in the current rate case. MMA/USPS-9 also seeks the name, title, and "autobiographical" information for the person and presumed witness who can answer questions about the PostalOne! program. Under Rules 25 and 26, interrogatories must be "reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence." The names of multiple Postal Service employees and their titles do not meet this standard because they will not produce any admissible evidence relevant to the issues before the Commission in this case.<sup>1</sup> As previously indicated, responsive answers to MMA's questions can be provided which should better inform MMA, and the Commission, of the effect of the PostalOne! program on postal operations. No need for an additional witness has been established, contrary to the assertion of MMA/USPS-9.

In any event, the Commission has consistently held that, "names, in and of themselves, usually are not relevant to the typical issues that arise in our proceeding." See Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R94-1/16 (May 23, 1994), at 3. Similarly, the titles of individuals responsible for informing responses to interrogatories posed to the Postal Service as an institution are irrelevant. Institutional responses are prepared for the express purpose of providing information that may inform the PRC's decision but which are not within the scope of any individual Postal Service witness's testimony. Identifying the names and titles of all persons who provided information for multiple institutional

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<sup>1</sup> As reflected in the testimony of witness Robinson, USPS-T-27, the purpose of this case is limited to recovering the escrow burden on an equal across-the-board basis, an institutional burden that is not based on the provision of postal services, whether in conjunction with PostalOne! or not.

responses is an overbroad burden on the Postal Service, as it would hold the potential for expanding the scope of this proceeding exponentially.

For these reasons, the Postal Service objects partially to MMA/USPS-1-9 because they seek customer-specific and proprietary information, and also objects partially to MMA/USPS-7(c) and MMA/USPS-9 because they seek irrelevant and burdensome information about employees. Notwithstanding, meaningful responses can and will be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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