

My name is Agnes Sweetsir. I am a small retail business owner in Galena, Alaska. I provide primarily basic food and household items to a population of approximately 700 people. We are totally dependent on air travel, thus are totally at the mercy of bi pass mail rates. It is my understanding that the rates are being considered for increase by as much as 40%. This would have a devastating effect on some of America's most vulnerable. I am purchasing fuel at the lowest possible rate (buying bulk) and am currently paying \$6.27 per gallon. People who are forced to buy at the pump are paying almost \$8 per gallon. I am paying \$.56 per kilowatt for electricity and \$.06 a gallon for water. With the continually increasing costs, like many employers we have been forced to lay off employees. As it is if we get bi pass, we have one opportunity a week, unless the carrier has enough to make a second scheduled run, so often our groceries are thawed, refrozen or even moldy. It is all at our own risk – the loss is exorbitant in the best of circumstances. We are currently providing milk just as a service and marking up just to cover costs – the price is \$10.74 per gallon (\$11 with City Sales Tax); with the increase it is possibly go up at least to \$16.82 per gallon. Bananas are currently \$2.39 per pound and may go up to at least \$2.72 per pound. Ten pounds of potatoes is currently \$18.59 and may increase to \$20.72. It's embarrassing but we have to mark up at least 25% to just cover the costs of operation and that's increasing all the time. How much fiscal benefit does increasing bi pass rates really provide? Perhaps there are other areas that make a more significant difference. I would be happy to provide more information if necessary if desired. I beg your consideration and help. Please feel free to contact me at [a\\_sweetsir@yahoo.com](mailto:a_sweetsir@yahoo.com). Thank you.

Respectfully,

Agnes Sweetsir