



**STATEMENT OF**

**ROBERT TOLMAN**

**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAIR**  
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

**DOCKET N2010-1**  
**INQUIRY ON FIVE-DAY DELIVERY PLAN**

**BEFORE THE**  
**POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC FIELD HEARING**  
**RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

**JUNE 23, 2010**

Good morning, Chairman Goldway and members of the Commission. Thank you for coming to Rapid City to hold this important hearing regarding the consequences of changing the number of postal delivery days from six to five each week.

My name is Robert Tolman, and I serve as the South Dakota Legislative Chair of the National Association of Postal Supervisors, or NAPS.

For the past 20 years, I have served as a postmaster in four different towns in the Rapid City area. My postal career also includes service as a temporary supervisor in the Rapid City Post Office for both mail processing tours, the Computer Forwarding Unit, Window Supervisor, and as an ad-hoc Customer Service Rep visiting local mailers to help them with their mailing needs.

I appear before you today to express my views as a citizen and as a member of the National Association of Postal Supervisors. I appear in my own personal capacity and not as a representative of the United States Postal Service.

In March of 2010, Postmaster General Potter outlined an aggressive plan to cut costs, increase productivity, and secure legislative and regulatory changes to maintain a viable postal service. More than 50 solutions were proposed to address mail volume declines, increases in workforce costs, and changes in consumer mailing behaviors. One of the most controversial proposals has involved reducing the frequency of mail delivery from six days a week to five.

I urge the Commission, in rendering its advisory opinion on five-day delivery, to consider a move to five-day delivery as a last resort in dealing with the Postal Service's financial difficulties, not the first option. In recent congressional testimony, Postmaster General Potter himself acknowledged that five-day delivery could be avoided were other pressing financial challenges solved. The Postmaster General confirmed that the return to the Postal Service of the estimated \$75 billion in overpayments for pre-1971-hired Post Office employees would remove the need for five-day delivery for at least another five years. Knowing that, one wonders why five-day delivery would be considered and implemented before the pension overpayment issue has been considered and resolved by Congress.

After all, five-day delivery would have significant ramifications:

- All First-Class street delivery mail sent on Wednesday with a 3-day service commitment will not make Saturday delivery.

- All mail for 2-day street commitment mail sent on Thursday will be delayed till Monday, and Friday's entire overnight street committed mail will be delayed till Monday.
- All street delivery mail for the entire nation will be affected for those days.
- The same is true for advertising or standard mail but only with different days of the week in play.
- The plan also calls for any item mailed on Saturday to receive no mail processing till Monday before moved.

The five-day plan will be experienced and felt directly by the public, compared to the indirect impact that behind-the-scene cost-saving moves, such mail processing facility consolidations, generate.

With the five-day plan, I estimate approximately 20-25 percent of all mail nationwide will be directly affected. The negative outcome of longer delivery times will be felt immediately, creating public disaffection for mail service. This will erode the value of mail and, in turn, lead to less use of the postal system. I believe this is the wrong direction. We need a vibrant, service-oriented organization that serves our citizens, not one that is retracting service and removing itself from every-day American life.

In the past few years, consolidations of some mail processing facilities have been opposed by home-state federal lawmakers because of the adverse impact they will have upon jobs and postal service at the local level. Five-day delivery will generate the same outcome on a far more enormous scale.

Most important, the loss of current levels of mail service will be felt by the entire nation, not just small areas affected by plant consolidations. The loss of delivery jobs will be nationwide, as opposed to the small loss of locally-impacted consolidated plant jobs. How many Fortune 500-sized companies would consider reducing their services with the likely result of opening the door to competitors to gain market share literally overnight?

Given my twenty years of postal experience, I know of no postal operations in western South Dakota with fluff and excess employees. The Dakotas District compliment committee analyzes all vacancies and combines duties before posting a position. Our employees are expected to reduce any expense wherever possible. Nationwide last year the Postal Service cut costs by \$6 billion dollars.

Customer satisfaction is critical to the success of postal operations, and it gives me great pride to report, from a 2009 Gallup Research Customer Service Poll, that the Spearfish, Custer, and Black Hawk Post Offices received the highest award -- the 5-Star Rating -- for Customer Service. This was no simple achievement, given what I consider to be a bare minimum operation. Our employees are still giving their best in these difficult financial times.

In closing, I urge the Commission to continue to carefully study the impact of the five-day delivery proposal. I do not believe the proposal is consistent with the Postal Service's obligation to provide prompt, reliable and efficient postal services to customers in all areas and all communities across the nation.

Thank you for your public service as members of this important commission overseeing the Postal Service. All of us in Rapid City are appreciative of your time and attention to our views. I'll be available for any questions you may have.