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Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Ave. NW, Ste 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

October 19, 2011

POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Members of the Commission,

This letter constitutes my appeal of the decision to close the post office located in Calpine, CA 96124. Enclosed with this appeal letter are 138 "Petition to Appeal the Calpine/Sattley Post Office closure" signatures that have been gathered, in opposition response to the final determination to close the "Sattley", CA Post Office, dated September 26, 2011.

Please advise the USPS that it correct its records, as the "Sattley, CA" post office was closed years ago and was consolidated with the Calpine post office. USPS has repeatedly been alerted as to the error but has yet to act on this issue. It is now the Calpine/Sattley, CA post office. The Calpine/Sattley post office is located in the County owned Eastern Sierra County Community Center, which truly is a small town community center, the very heart of our town.

In the 1920's Calpine was a small logging town called "California Pine Company". On the north side of town are the small row houses that housed many of the company's employees, a quaint and historical feature of Calpine and still occupied and improved by it's residents.

First of all, let me state that this final determination document is virtually a carbon copy version of the original proposal "RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS" posted on June 29, 2011. The purpose of the postal service and the current law created by an act of Congress is as follows:

TITLE 39--POSTAL SERVICE, PART I--GENERAL,
CHAPTER 1--POSTAL POLICY AND DEFINITIONS, Sec. 101. Postal policy:

- "(a) The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people (Note: the people is inclusionary, not exclusionary) by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution, created by Act of Congress, and supported by the people. The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities. The costs of establishing and maintaining the Postal Service shall not be apportioned to impair the overall value of such service to the people.
- (b) The Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining. No small post office shall be closed solely for operating at a deficit, it being the specific intent of the Congress that effective postal services be insured to residents of both urban and rural communities. (emphasis added)."

The USPS decision to close the Calpine/Sattley post office does not meet the requirements of an act of Congress and must be reversed.

With regard to the "RESPONSIVENESS", I look to Postmaster's League President Mark Strong's reasoned testimony of September 26, 2011 to this body, the Postal Regulatory Commission. I agree with his entire testimony and I will be utilizing many of his quotes in this appeal. It does not meet the needs of this isolated community.

On page 23 starting at line 7 the League President states,

D. Failure to consider services and unique needs of communities

"I have received many specific examples where the Postal Service has not adequately taken into account the unique needs of a community. While the purpose of this proceeding is not to consider specific instances, I do think that a showing of a variety of cases where important local concerns were ignored is indicative of how the local processes are failing. In most cases, no consideration is given to the cost for the customer if they have to drive to the next town to pick up their mail and do business with the post office."

And at page 29, line 6 he says:

B. Flawed implementation policy already in effect

“The League notes that, despite the asserted opportunity for communities to provide input for the Postal Service’s consideration prior to deciding to close a post office, the Postal Service has been taking steps that both hinder meaningful community input, while simultaneously cutting off post offices as though the decision to close them has already been made. Postmasters are not the only ones to have observed this difficulty.”

With respect to the May 5, 2011 meeting here in Calpine with Renee Brown Manager, Post Office Operations in Las Vegas NV; it appears the information and concerns provided by the many citizens (72 signed in) at that meeting to her went on deaf ears as the outcome to close our Calpine office stayed the same.

At **B. The purpose and scope of my testimony** on page 8, starting at line 17:

“Finally, the way in which the Postal Service is treating these community meetings raises very serious questions about the integrity of the Postal Service’s effort in this initiative, and whether the Postal Service is seriously conducting these meetings with the goal of gathering information to understand and meet the needs and desires of these communities. Widespread information from the field indicates that in too many cases the community meetings are simply canned briefings designed for public relations purposes, in order to create the illusion that the Postal Service is taking into account the needs of these communities and is following both the spirit and letter of the law. That truth of the matter is that the Postal Service is not taking into account the needs of the communities, and thus is not honoring the spirit of the law nor, in many cases, the letter of the law.”

We disagree with and are appealing the final determination as it does not address the issue of Calpine being in a geographically isolated area with risky travel conditions especially in winter, to services rendered exclusively by the United States Postal Service (USPS), when those services already exist at the current Calpine/Sattley post office location. Nor does it address the information obtained after the June 29 closure proposal that the Sierraville Post Office is now on the closure list, which dramatically changed the outcome. This was discovered through an online article at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43887908/ns/business-us_business/ in late July 2011. We were never informed about the Sierraville closure by USPS until it was confirmed by David Rupert on August 18th via an email response to Sierra County Supervisor Bill Nunes. Mr. Nunes was questioning the “second closure list” as to why Sierraville was still on it. In fact, in that same email Mr. Nunes commented he was told Sierraville was on the list in error and was removed, which never happened. It was during this time frame that it was discovered the delivery route was to be changed to Clio instead of Sierraville, a fact that was never in writing until the September 26 final determination. We were never allowed to comment on this in any formal INVITATION FOR COMMENTS document from USPS.

As stated in the RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS of June 29 and September 26 at paragraph 3, “We will continue to provide effective service through the Sierraville Main Post Office”; and in both documents “If/when this proposal is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Sierraville Post Office, an EAS-11 level office.” And at the last page of the June 29 document under VI. SUMMARY it states, “The Postal Service is proposing to close the “Sattley”, CA Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by highway contract route service under the administrative responsibility of the Sierraville Post Office, located 13 miles away.” The Sierra Valley is located at 5000’ Elevation and is the largest Alpine Valley in the country, with wind, rain and snowstorms occurring frequently from Fall through Spring.

If Calpine residents were to have to drive to Sierraville (the June 29 Proposal) to access services rendered exclusively by USPS, this would pose a risk; especially in winter having to deal with the Sierra Valley snowstorms and drifting snow in and along the roadway. In an article posted on msnbc.com, “an elderly man died on snow-covered roads driving to the next closest post office 17 miles away”. The link is as follows: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35261157/ns/us_news-life/t/post-office-closings-upset-rural-communities/#.

This is not a well thought out determination, and would be particularly risky driving for our seniors who may not have a computer or the capability of computer skills or even internet access to pay bills online, etc. Rarely do I pay bills online, only if the payment might not be received in time by mailing it. This closure would also put more vehicles on the road vs. one USPS mail carrier, which would be delivering to the Calpine proposed cluster boxes anyway. In the worst economy of our lifetime and with gasoline prices so high in addition to more air pollution from added vehicles on the roadway, this determination is ill-conceived.

The June 29th proposal document also stated at paragraph 9, "Retail service is also available at the Clio post office an EAS-13 level office, located six miles away". Please note that Clio is thirteen miles away as stated on the last page of the September 26th determination document; from Calpine over Calpine Summit, over double the mileage as stated in the June 29th document.

In addition, information was obtained regarding the Sierraville post office; that it is on an "Expanded Access Study List" for closure. This new information was not listed on the June 29, 2011 "Proposal to Close the "Sattley, CA" Post Office". In the September 26 final determination document on the last page, USPS has chosen to "provide delivery and retail services by highway contract route service under the administrative responsibility of the Clio Post Office, located 13 miles away". This new determination is an even worse idea as that would put Calpine residents at even more risk by driving 26 miles round trip from Calpine (elevation 5000') over Calpine Summit (elevation 5500') to Clio (elevation 4500') to access services already being rendered in Calpine, as that infrastructure is already in place. This issue has never been addressed and/or it has been ignored. If there was ever a case for a Post Office to remain open, this would be it; due to geographic isolation and winter weather conditions. The area between Calpine and Clio is also a major deer migration area. Again, more vehicles on the road vs. one USPS delivery vehicle. Calpine Summit is an extremely winding road and can be treacherous in winter with numerous wintertime accidents.

According to PRC testimony, Handbook 101 states that the questions/concerns raised at the community meetings will be part of the record to be considered in the feasibility study. Since the Sierraville closure was not divulged at the Calpine meeting, it was not part of the record, not considered nor did we have a chance to respond to the change. It was later requested to extend the comment period to allow comment on this new information, but to no avail.

In the "RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS" proposal posted on June 29, 2011 and also in the September 26th final determination document it states on page 1, "A petition supporting the retention of the "Sattley" Post Office was received on June 24, 2011 with 59 signatures." I do not know where this information came from; I never saw or signed this petition. But on August 24, 2011 I submitted a petition with 274 signatures along with a cover letter opposing the Calpine closure to Loretta Kirkpatrick Manager Consumer Affairs, Las Vegas NV. It stated the reasons why we oppose the closure and requested another public hearing with those official(s) making the closure decision with respect to the new information on the Sierraville closure. Whether the cover letter and petitions went beyond Ms. Kirkpatrick's desk, I do not know. If requested, I can and will supply this information.

The Clio post office is only three miles away from the Graeagle post office and both are at the same elevation located within the Mohawk Valley. I also understand it is very costly to run the Clio post office. We are not proposing USPS close the Clio post office because of its close proximity to Graeagle. But it just doesn't make sense for Calpine residents to have to drive 26 miles round trip up over Calpine Summit and down to Clio for services rendered exclusively by USPS when the Calpine post office already exists!

Not to mention the added expense of building and maintaining outdoor cluster boxes on Sierra County property. Will an agreement be needed between USPS and Sierra County before this structure is built? This also has not been addressed. On both the proposal and determination documents, the Cost of Replacement Service was \$0. How can the cost of cluster boxes, the installation and maintenance of those boxes plus the cost of snow removal add up to "nothing"? In addition, the added stress and inconvenience it poses for residents particularly seniors, attempting to get to an outdoor cluster box to pick up mail and medications in snowy and icy conditions and all forms of inclement weather will compound the problem.

Sierra County has even proposed reducing the rent to USPS. I for one would be more than willing to pay a rental fee for a box if that would help keep our post office open, and I know other residents would be willing also. And what about packages too big for a cluster box, what happens with those packages; would a Calpine resident have to drive 26 miles to Clio to pick up or mail a package? Also not mentioned in any document is the fact that resident's mailing addresses will change, and to what end? Will we also lose our ZIP Code if the Calpine office closes? Confusing the situation even more for everyone involved, and these questions go unanswered in both documents.

In an article about the USPS closures Renee Brown Manager, Post Office Operations Las Vegas NV who coordinated the Calpine meeting, callously stated about the Calpine closure "there were no other retail businesses open, so most people made regular 'trips to town' anyway". What town was she talking about, Sierraville (no services beside a restaurant, a feed supply store and gas station/quick stop)? Clio (no services at all)? When I make a "trip to town" for shopping I go to Reno, Nevada once a month or less. That is an hour away, two hours round trip - either my husband or I go to the Calpine post office daily.

In that same article, a statement reads about the Orovada NV post office, "It was later determined that the office would remain open, thanks to community input and a review of options". We request that common

sense prevails here also and that our community input not be ignored, but the same determination be made for the Calpine post office, that it remain open.

I have a small business and use the Calpine post office exclusively for buying stamps, mailing bills, letters and insured parcels, registered parcels and certified mail, express mail, items I have to sign for and picking up mail at my box. There are at least 17 small businesses within the Calpine area that use USPS at the Calpine post office exclusively, one in particular sending and receiving large heavy parcels.

I do not know why rural towns such as Calpine are being specifically targeted. It appears an agenda to punish rural communities, as we are not a large voting block as is the case in urban areas. It will fatally dissolve and dismantle small town America if these closures continue. As Mr. Strong's testimony to this Commission states on page 16 at line 6, "If a rural post office disappears, the town often disappears."

According to a Wall Street Journal article located at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903999904576467921947248738.html>, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe stated, "In many cases, the brick-and-mortar post office will change rather than vanish. Under a new "village post office concept," the postal service will seek deals with grocery stores or gas stations in towns that are losing a post office to provide limited postal services." Well, the USPS determination eliminates the Calpine post office - we do not even have a grocery store or a gas station. We only have a Community Hall building in which the Post Office resides. In that Hall are also kitchen and bathroom facilities used for community events. A fitness center is located upstairs above the post office.

In Mr. Strong's testimony to this commission on page 7 at 17, "My testimony will show that the Retail Access Optimization (RAO) Initiative, which proposes to review and potentially discontinue operations at over 3,650 post offices, stations and branches, is detrimental to the level of services presently provided to small and rural communities, will hurt their economies and social structure, and does not even provide a corresponding benefit to the Postal Service. The Postal Service's attempt to change the nature of postal services in this Docket is no less than a retreat from serving rural America and, thus, from its obligation to provide Universal Service. The implications of this retreat are significant, not only for rural citizens but for America and its economy as a whole. The Postal Service is more than a business. It is here to bind the nation together and to serve rural America by giving it the maximum degree of effective and regular service. Congress made that perfectly clear - a fact the Postal Service ignores when it adopted the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, the Postal Reorganization Act Amendments of 1976, and the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006."

If the primary purpose of the RAO Initiative is to reduce costs, Mr. Strong explains in his testimony on page 12 at line 14, "...the closing of these 3,650 offices is not the billion dollars that the Postal Service originally alleged, but estimated to save less than \$200 million, or less than 3/10s of one percent of the Postal Service's operating budget. One could save more than that by playing with the rounding functions in the Postal Service's budget."

Closing rural post offices which account for less than 1 percent of USPS's annual budget expenses, is not the answer. Quoting from a postal publication, "It is a known fact that 92 percent of all post offices lose money". The savings are minimal both short term and long term, especially when considering all the costs of closing an office. In some cases, guidelines are not being followed, very little information shared, the process is being rushed and we have a mess. The seven largest postal Areas in this country cost twice as much to run as the 10,000 smallest post offices. An individual small post office was never established to make money. It was established to provide the same universal mailing service to everyone, equal access under law. As Mr. Strong's testimony stated on page 29 at line 1, "We also have to remember that the Postal Service has said that less than 18% of all offices make money. Offices like my own in Sun City Arizona that service over 100,000 delivers has lost over 2 million a year for the last three years, and are not studied for closure. Is there a double standard on profitability for urban vs. rural? I think so."

We here in rural America are not second-class citizens; we deserve access to the postal services that urban areas enjoy.

In light of the information that the Sierraville Post Office may now be closed and we are forced to go to the Clio Post Office for services, the entire process should be reviewed for its flawed analysis and implementation. We again request a public hearing at the Community Hall here in Calpine before the appeal decision is rendered with the official(s) making this appeal decision, so they can see first hand geographically what the small rural town of Calpine is dealing with if our post office closes.

In closing, local small town post offices are the lifeblood of communities such as ours; they serve the needs of and are the backbone of rural America. They are an integral part of the social, political and economic

fabric of small communities. Closing the Calpine post office would do great harm to the residents of this small town; it would be another death knell to our community and will hurt attracting those that might like to live or do business here, particularly in these economically hard times. The post office binds the community and the nation together. Rural postal employees are our friends, neighbors and family. We will stand up; for them, and for us.

Perhaps USPS can close an urban Post Office where mileage, weather and geographic isolation are not such issues; or cut an employee in Reno or Las Vegas. Enclosed with this appeal is a letter of support from Congressman Tom McClintock, 4th District, California.

Please send a copy of this appeal on to Mr. Dean Granholm VP of Delivery, as I am unable to obtain his address.

Sincerely,



Debbie and Ken McMaster
Residents and post office box holders and customers
Calpine, CA 96124

cc: Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, USPS
Congressman Tom McClintock, 4th District California
Igor Birman, Congressman McClintock's Chief of Staff
Tim Holabird, Congressman McClintock's Northern Counties Director
Senator Diane Feinstein
Doug Watson Manager, Post Office Operations/A Reno NV
Renee Brown Manager, Post Office Operations Las Vegas NV
Terry Felix, Facilities Requirements Specialist Las Vegas NV
David Rupert USPS Communications, Denver CO
Sierra County Supervisor Chairman, Lee Adams
Sierra County Supervisor Bill Nunes

Enclosures:

120 Petition to Appeal signatures
Letter of support, Congressman Tom McClintock

TOM McCLINTOCK
4th DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

426 CANNON HOUSE, OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2511

8700 AUBURN 1 BUSINESS ROAD, SUITE 100
GRANITE BAY, CA 95746
(916) 766-8560

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0504

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN AND
ALASKAN NATIVE AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

October 12, 2011

Patrick Donahoe, Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. Donahoe:

I write in support of the petition of appeal regarding the closure of the Calpine-Sattley Post Office in Calpine, California.

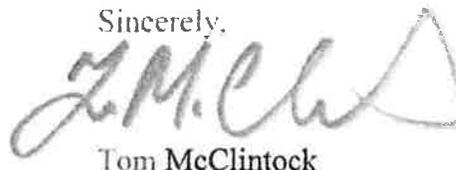
As I have indicated in my previous correspondence, the closure of this facility is in direct contravention of the USPS universal service mandate. I am also especially concerned by the conduct of the USPS and its apparently disingenuous engagement with local residents.

At the request of my office, USPS held a meeting to discuss a rent-reduction agreement with local officials, who were willing to accept lower payments to ensure continued operation of the facility. However, with the finalization of the closure occurring the very next day, it is apparent that USPS gave little or no consideration to the proposal and had no genuine interest in working in good-faith with local residents or with my office.

If the USPS insists on closing rural facilities in order to compensate for its inability to address a flawed business model and labor system, it would be in the best interest of taxpayers to terminate its government-sanctioned monopoly and eminent domain powers and allow private enterprise to provide postal service in a more cost-effective and equitable manner.

I strongly support the community's petition for appeal and urge your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Tom McClintock

Petition to Appeal the Calpine/Sattley Post Office closure

We the people served by the United States Postal Service appeal the determination to close the Calpine "Sattley" post office (96124, located in Calpine, not Sattley, CA). The consequences of closing this post office, located in a geographically isolated area, would have tremendous negative impacts on the community. In particular, it would put the residents (especially seniors) at risk during winter snow storms and inclement weather due to the Clilo post office being 13 miles away (26 miles round trip) over Calpine Summit; an elevation gain and loss of 1,000 feet. We demand a public hearing at the Community Center in Calpine before the end of the 30 day appeal period (October 26, 2011) or before the appeal decision is rendered with the official(s) making this determination.

Signature

Address

1. Kathleen O Smith
2. DEBRA Haar
3. Arnold Cuveller
4. Wayne A. Whit
5. Penny Holland
6. Tracy Studer
7. Gayle J. Zita
8. John Kellert
9. Don Lee
10. Sam Stinson
11. Cole Jow
12. Salli Wise
13. Debra Miller
14. Paul Madde
15. Larry J. Wright
16. Spencer J. J. J.
17. Wynne W. J.
18. Donna J. Allison
19. April Watson
20. Merrick Turner

Petition to **Appeal** the Calpine/Sattley Post Office closure

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Signature

Address

1. Joanne Mackay
2. [Signature]
3. Tim Riffel
4. Stephen Lake
5. Mailee King
6. Kimi Allen
7. [Signature]
8. Jim Adams
9. [Signature]
10. Marlene Boggs
11. [Signature]
12. Mary Jo Knuth
13. LAURENCE DEVITA F
14. [Signature]
15. Nevisa M. Kolb
16. [Signature]
17. Jim Doble
18. Rayne Church
19. Amy Burt
20. Jalk Eady

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Signature

Address

1. Carl Gladwell
2. [Signature]
3. Fred Hoff
4. Grace Corliff
5. [Signature]
6. Mike Frosch
7. Jaydon Scholberg
8. Judith & Bradley
9. David Bradley
10. Johanna Olson
11. Thomas - [Signature]
12. W. G. P. [Signature]
13. Jay C. Armstrong
14. Vieta Bruckner
15. Solly Bruckner
16. Paula Crawford
17. Kathryn A. Kelley
18. [Signature]
19. Sue Clive
20. Brian Schmaling

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<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>
1. Virginia Butler	
2. Two	
3. Joann Chesney	
4. Janet Botker	
5. Mich Bost	
6. Rachel Maria Condon	
7. Anne Jallat	
8. Out to	
9. Missy Potterson	
10. Dan Hill	
11. M. Dismore	
12. Nancy (Bever) Reynolds	
13. Colleen Griffin	
14. Cy Lynn	
15. Lynn McKelvie	
16. Theresa	
17. C.P.R.	
18. Ken McMaster	
19. Brent Tuggle	
20. Nicki Pastore	

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Signature

Address

1. *[Signature]*
2. *[Signature]*
3. Ken Spodis
4. Patty Spodis
5. Shaun Fee
6. *[Signature]*
7. Christine Lundberg
8. *[Signature]*
9. Joe Maddox
10. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ R. Rosewood
11. *[Signature]*
12. Brent Tuggle
13. Nancy Rosewood
14. Robert V. Durrell
15. Dindy Casaroso
16. *[Signature]*
17. Janie Maddox
18. Tami McCollum
19. Laura Read
20. Dony Read

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Signature

Address

1. Callie Watta
2. Emil Watta
3. Dillon Tuggle
4. Brandon Tuggle
5. Sami Sanders
6. Walnie Maher
7. James Brock
8. [Signature]
9. Mike E. High
10. Pat Bell
11. Barbara Boyan
12. Barbara & Martell
13. Frank Wade
14. [Signature]
15. [Signature]
16. [Signature]
17. Kevin [Signature]
18. Karen Johnson
19. Lynn Stewart
20. Dennis Smith

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Signature

Address

1. Kathi Bertagnoli
2. Lena Bertagnoli (Bertagnoli)
3. Kip Bay Dant
4. Kenneth J. Saw
5. Barbara C Pascoe
6. Kent Pascoe
7. VINCENT DEL BARBER
8. USA Tugale
9. Beverly Mitchell
10. Bob Bighy
11. Billy Bigham
12. RIZ MARTINETTI
13. Lisa Murruti
14. Nick Vaccines
15. Kathryn Chase
16. Jenny Kennedy
17. Ari Murruti
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

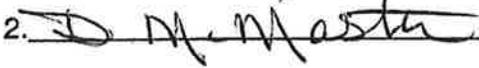
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Signature

Address

1.  (Joe Lennick)

2. 

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