2204 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0530
(202) 225-3976
www.house.gov/waxman

DISTRICT OFFICE:
8436 WEST THIRD STREET
SUITE 600
LOS ANGELES, CA 90048-4183
(323) 651-1040
(818) 878-7400
(310) 652-3095

Postal Regulatory Commission
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RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–0530

HENRY A. WAXMAN
30TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

A2013-1

Postal Regulatory Commission
Office of the Chief Admin. Officer
OCT 9 2012

September 20, 2012

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POSTAL REGULATORY

Shoshana Grove
Secretary of the Commission
Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue, NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Dear Secretary Grove,

As the Representative of California's 30th Congressional District, which includes the City of Santa Monica, I am writing to appeal the United States Postal Service's (USPS) decision to approve the closure of the Santa Monica Post Office located at 1248 5th Street and to consolidate its operations at the Santa Monica Carrier Annex located at 1653 7th Street.

The 5th Street Post Office is a classified station of the Santa Monica postal installation. In its August 17, 2012 Notice of Approval, USPS described the closure of the 5th Street Post Office as a relocation. USPS's decision to terminate all postal operations there, however, and its stated intention to sell the historic building constitutes a discontinuance, which is defined in Handbook PO-101 as "an action in which an independent Post Office, Classified Station, or Classified Branch is permanently closed or consolidated."[1]

In its decision to close the 5th Street Post Office, USPS failed in a number of instances to comply with 39 CFR 241.3, which establishes the rules governing USPS's decisions on post office closures.:

1. **Notice** -- USPS failed to provide the community with a 60-day notice of the proposed closure. Also, in its Notice of Approval, USPS failed to inform the public of the right to appeal a closure to the Postal Regulatory Commission within 30 days of the date the Final Determination was posted.

[1] Postal Service-Operated Retail Facilities Discontinuance Guide, Handbook PO-101. (2012, January). United States Postal Service. Pg. 54

2. **Effect on Community** -- USPS did not consider the effect of closing the 5th Street Post Office on the community it serves, nor has it communicated the benefits of the Carrier Annex to the community. The 5th Street Post Office, which is located in the heart of Santa Monica, is easily accessible to thousands of residents who walk or depend on public transit. Many seniors and residents with disabilities depend on the easily accessible facility, which has plenty of parking and is well served by multiple local and regional bus lines.

   In contrast, the 7th Street Carrier Annex is in a remote location that raises serious questions about access and safety. The Carrier Annex is surrounded on three sides by the 10 Freeway and a one way off-ramp to the south, the Big Blue Bus Maintenance Facility and Bus yard to the west, and a 5-lane stretch of Pacific Coast Highway to the north. On the northwest side, a planned light rail line will run down the middle of Colorado Avenue and terminate at a still unfinished site on 5th and Colorado. Pedestrians currently served by the 5th Street Post Office would have to cross these light rail tracks to get to the Carrier Annex. The attached pictures illustrate the stark contrast between the two locations.

3. **Economic Savings** -- The Notice of Approval does not give a specific reason for the closure beyond stating that "the reason behind this cost-reduction and revenue generation plan is the alignment of USPS workforce and infrastructure with a 20 percent drop in total mail volume over the past three years due to a diversion to electronic communications and business transactions, and other economic factors."[2] USPS has not provided the community with information about estimated economic savings of the proposed action. It appears, however, that the consolidation of the 5th Street Post Office at the remotely located Carrier Annex could result in a decline in revenue.

Finally, the 5th Street Post Office is a historic landmark that has been serving the residents of Santa Monica since its dedication in 1938. It is the policy of USPS that any facility project that will have an effect on cultural resources will be undertaken in accordance with Section 106 of the general provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470, et seq., Executive Order 12072 and Executive Order 13006. The Postal Service has failed to demonstrate how it intends to comply with this policy.

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[2] Notice of Approval. (2012, August 17) United States Postal Service

I urge the Postal Regulatory Commission to ensure that USPS follows the process required to make a decision on the closure of the 5th Street Post Office. I also ask that you suspend any effort to close the 5th Street Post Office pending the outcome of the process for appeals.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Santa Monica Post Office at 1248 5th Street

PARKING
ONLY
MINIMUM
FINE $250

Bike Center
UNITED
STATES
POST
OFFICE

Carrier Annex located at 1653 7th Street

5
Olympic
Santa Monica Fwy
Los Angeles