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

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Mailing Online Service)

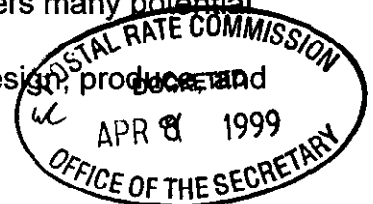
Docket No. MC98-1

**ANSWER OF THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE
TO MOTION OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
TO SUSPEND THE PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE
(April 9, 1999)**

On April 8, 1999, the Postal Service moved for suspension of the procedural schedule in this docket. As no active participant opposes the motion, the OCA assumes that the motion will be granted. If, however, the motion is denied, the OCA requests a short extension of time within which to file its brief, which is due this date.

In the April 8 motion, the Postal Service explains that development of PostOffice Online has been terminated, and that the PostOffice Online channel will be eliminated. This, the Postal Service explains, "renders incorrect or moot some of the evidence regarding information systems costs presented by the Postal Service in this docket." The Postal Service states, however, that it "remains committed to Mailing Online as a strategically important initiative that should continue to move forward as rapidly as possible."

In the brief it planned to file before receipt of the Postal Service's motion, the OCA was prepared to voice similar sentiments. The OCA supports a Mailing Online experiment. The OCA has reservations with respect to certain aspects of the rates and fees to be charged for Mailing Online, but the service offers customers many potential benefits. Mailing Online offers small-volume mailers the ability to design, produce and



deposit mailings from the convenience of their desktops, as well as the potential opportunity to obtain automation rates. Mailing Online also offers the Postal Service the opportunity to reduce mail processing and transportation costs by sorting and moving mail electronically.

For many years the OCA has advocated a new classification that would allow small-volume mailers to take advantage of automation discounts. The OCA is pleased that the Postal Service has proposed one way to give small-volume mailers reduced rates for mail with low cost characteristics. The OCA looks forward to the continuation of data gathering from the market test and to the Postal Service's further proposals to move Mailing Online forward to a nationwide experiment under appropriate terms and conditions.

Respectfully submitted,



Emmett Rand Costich
Attorney
Office of the Consumer Advocate

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this date served the foregoing document upon all participants of record in this proceeding in accordance with section 12 of the rules of practice.



Emmett Rand Costich
Attorney

Washington, D.C. 20268-0001
April 9, 1999