

CONCURRING OPINION OF COMMISSIONER HAMMOND

The Postal Service originally presented a plan (the Retail Access Optimization Initiative) that generated more comments and complaints from patrons, and more questions about what the future of people's business dealings with their Postal Service would be, than any other Advisory Opinion request this Commission had ever received.

Closing thousands of post offices could have caused more harm to the communities and businesses that rely on those post offices, generated more negative reaction from customers, and saved less money than other proposals the Postal Service has put forth to deal with the billions of dollars they have been losing.

In response to the public's comments and the Commission's RAOI Advisory Opinion recommendations, the Postal Service came up with a constructive plan that adjusts its retail operations yet keeps post offices open. It will do so in a way that allows POSTPlan post offices to continue to provide the same services they provide today.

The Postal Service is also taking extra steps to be a responsible member of the communities where they are making these changes. The Postal Service is accommodating patrons at literally thousands of post offices by getting their input into what kind of facility they want, what hours of operation would be most convenient and what alternative access would be beneficial to the community.

I know of no other federal agency that has been so specific in outreach to the people they serve. These are positive actions that should be acknowledged.

While the Commission's Advisory Opinion includes recommendations for implementation of the Post Office Structure Plan, I think it is important also to recognize that POSTPlan is a responsive improvement over the Postal Service's original intention—to simply close thousands of post offices around the country.

Tony Hammond