

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2023

The Honorable Louis DeJoy  
Postmaster General, United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Room 10300  
Washington, DC 20260-2200

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy—

On December 6, the United States Postal Service (USPS) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) published the results of their audit of delivery, operations, and customer service in 13 Colorado municipalities.<sup>1</sup> The audit's results reinforced the concerns our offices have heard from many of our Colorado communities, most notably about workforce shortages and delivery issues. Constituents in our mountain communities rely on USPS for critical services such as delivery of medications and bills year-round, and during the holiday season it is especially important that we all work together to ensure timely mail delivery. The OIG's findings clearly demonstrate the need to take immediate and substantial action to ensure that our communities are properly served by USPS.

The OIG's report illuminates many issues our offices have previously raised, including:

- Packages being delivered to the incorrect location, wrongly returned to the sender, or erroneously held at the post office;
- Significantly slower delivery speeds in mountain towns compared to other Colorado communities,
- Ineffective transportation schedules and lack of sufficient mail-sorting equipment at facilities; and
- Personnel recruitment and retention challenges at facilities.

This last point is of particular concern: 12 of the 13 delivery units included in the report were understaffed throughout the auditing period, and, alarmingly, at least four facilities were understaffed for the entire 43 weeks of the audit. The report highlighted that post offices struggled to retain personnel, even in the first few months of a new employees' tenure. Further, the audit underscored that no USPS workers in our Colorado mountain communities receive increased wages from locality pay or a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), which could be beneficial to USPS recruiting and retaining workers in Colorado mountain towns where hiring is extremely competitive and housing is often cost prohibitive.

<sup>1</sup> <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.uspsig.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-12/23-130-r24.pdf>

It is unacceptable to not see improvements on these long-standing issues, but it is even more alarming during the holiday season. We appreciate that the USPS has committed to adopting 7 of 10 recommendations; however, we urge you to continue working with the OIG to address recommendations 1, 2, and 5 outlined in the report. Specifically, we urge USPS to continue to work with and adopt OIG's recommendations to assess the effects of USPS work environments on workers, explore the feasibility of increasing personnel pay based on locality for Colorado mountain towns, and require Postmaster training for any individual serving as postmaster. The cost of living in these mountain towns has increased substantially, and the hourly pay of USPS has not kept up with the cost of living in these areas. Each of these recommendations are critically important to improving USPS recruitment and retention of workers, and we urge the USPS to continue working with the OIG to address these recommendations.

We also agree with each of the additional eight OIG recommendations that USPS has committed to adopting. We are especially pleased to see USPS accept OIG's recommendation to create, and expand access to, professional development training for workers at all levels. This will help address several issues, including mail delivery delays. The OIG's report found examples of workers who did not know how to report mail delays and managers who failed to address mail processing discrepancies. Specifically, in Steamboat Springs, the OIG found that managers were not adequately trained to adjust to changes in mail delivery routes. These issues exacerbated delivery delays or resulted in mail being returned to the sender. We believe all USPS employees, but particularly managers, must have access to training that empower them to successfully fulfill their responsibility and prevent errors such as these in the future.

In addition, we agree with OIG's recommendation to establish and maintain appropriate transparency systems for mail processing and delivery. The OIG report found that in several instances, internal post office management within the district did not conduct appropriate oversight to ensure changes were made to mail routes, transportation schedules, or mail sorting processes. We believe that creating space for healthy managerial oversight will ensure responsible and timely mail delivery by USPS. We urge you to create effective mail monitoring systems that support strong mail delivery while protecting worker rights.

As the USPS continues implementation of the OIG's recommendations by April 30, 2024, we stand by our commitment to work with USPS to identify legislative solutions that will help sustain progress. Earlier this year, you agreed to provide a list of USPS workforce policy priorities that require Congressional action. To date, we have not received that list. We ask that, no later than January 31, 2024, USPS provide the list of policy priorities and legislative proposals to our staff.

USPS provides essential service to every American family and the businesses that drive our economy. It is therefore critical that USPS resolve the operational and workforce issues that were highlighted by the OIG's audit report. We look forward to seeing the timely implementation of

the OIG's recommendations, and to receiving more information about how Congress can successfully partner with USPS in the future.

Sincerely,



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

CC: Donald Kravos, USPS District Manager, Colorado/Wyoming