

United States Senate

January 27, 2020

Tammy L. Whitcomb
Inspector General of the U.S. Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn St.
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

Dear Ms. Whitcomb:

I am incredibly grateful for the dedicated work of United States Postal Service employees, whose services are critical to the people and businesses of our communities. I also acknowledge the many challenges that face the Postal Service, including limited financial resources and difficulty recruiting, hiring and retaining post office personnel.

However, consistent, dependable, and timely mail delivery is critical, especially for those living in rural areas, and I write to request that the United States Postal Service Office of the Inspector General review reports of failures to deliver mail, lost mail and packages, and other alleged mail issues in New Hampshire. These concerning reports were brought to the attention of my office by constituents and post office employees, and my staff has worked diligently to resolve these issues with the aid of the Northern New England District Office in Portland, Maine. However, major problems remain, and I request your Office's assistance in determining the systemic causes of these issues and identifying potential solutions.

Sunapee & Newport

After transitioning the originating location of rural route deliveries from Sunapee to Newport, the Sunapee Town Office and residents report that they have experienced inconsistent and delayed mail delivery, including no rural delivery between December 11 and December 16, 2019.^{1,2} Residents also report that when packages have gone missing, the Newport Post Office has been unable to track the missing items. In addition, the chairman of the Sunapee Board of Selectmen wrote to me with concerns that most recently, the Town Office did not receive mail delivery between November 27 and December 4, 2019, and that residents have raised complaints about repeated incidents of mis-delivered, delayed, lost, or returned mail.

Spofford

Spofford residents report that beginning in May 2019, when their previous mail carrier retired, they began experiencing several mail delivery issues, including multiple-day delays impacting

¹ Minette McQueeney, *Sunapee appoints new deputy town clerk/tax collector*, InterTown Record at 4-5 (Dec. 24, 2019), https://609e3f42-6dd9-41cc-b2d6-9ea1deba7523.filesusr.com/ugd/de3512_2f1058a754834e41abf65d261a07e761.pdf.

² Minette McQueeney, *Hassan inquires about Sunapee rural delivery issues*, InterTown Record at 1 (Jan. 14, 2020), <https://www.intertownrecord.com/single-post/2020/01/14/The-January-14-2020-edition-of-the-InterTown-Record-is-now-available-online>.

medications and documents, deliveries to incorrect addresses, and significant errors in mail tracking systems. Despite contacting their postmaster, residents report no improvements in mail delivery and difficulties in reporting their issues. Since December 2019, residents report that mail delivery issues have worsened with delays lasting more than a week, reportedly because of a shortage of drivers.

Bradford

Bradford residents report that beginning in December 2019, they did not have mail delivery for more than a week. When they attempted to pick up their mail from the Bradford Post Office after these significant delays, they were informed that the mail has yet to be broken down for delivery.

Gilford & Laconia

Gilford residents report that they regularly experience mail delivery delays or no mail delivery for three to four days. When my staff contacted the Laconia Post Office that services Gilford, the Laconia postmaster stated that delivery and regular mail routes were impacted by inclement weather. However, residents report delivery delays even when the weather was not an issue, reportedly because of staffing shortages and delays in sorting mail. Residents have reported these delays for several years and have been told to request a full-service post office for their town.

Additionally, Laconia and Gilford residents report that, despite assurances of improvement from the Laconia Post Office, their mail delivery has been repeatedly delayed for several days and when it is delivered, residents raised concerns that it has been left on the side of the road or tossed in snowbanks, rather than placed in mail or package boxes. When mail or packages have gone missing, residents report that they are unable to contact the post office and their complaints have gone unanswered.³

I want to reiterate that I acknowledge the many challenges that Postal Service personnel face, and I appreciate the work of the Office of the Inspector General and your attention to this important matter. Please direct any questions and requests for additional information on individual cases to Allison M. Tinsey (allison_tinsey@hsgac.senate.gov) and Elise M. Britton (elise_britton@hassan.senate.gov).

Sincerely,


Margaret Wood Hassan

CC: Megan Brennan, Postmaster General of the United States

³ Denise C. Burke, *Filing complains is the only solution for non-delivery*, The Laconia Daily Sun (Jan. 6, 2020), https://www.laconiadailysun.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/filing-complaints-is-the-only-solution-for-non-delivery/article_e7bd91b6-30a0-11ea-bbc9-838fd46e7894.html.